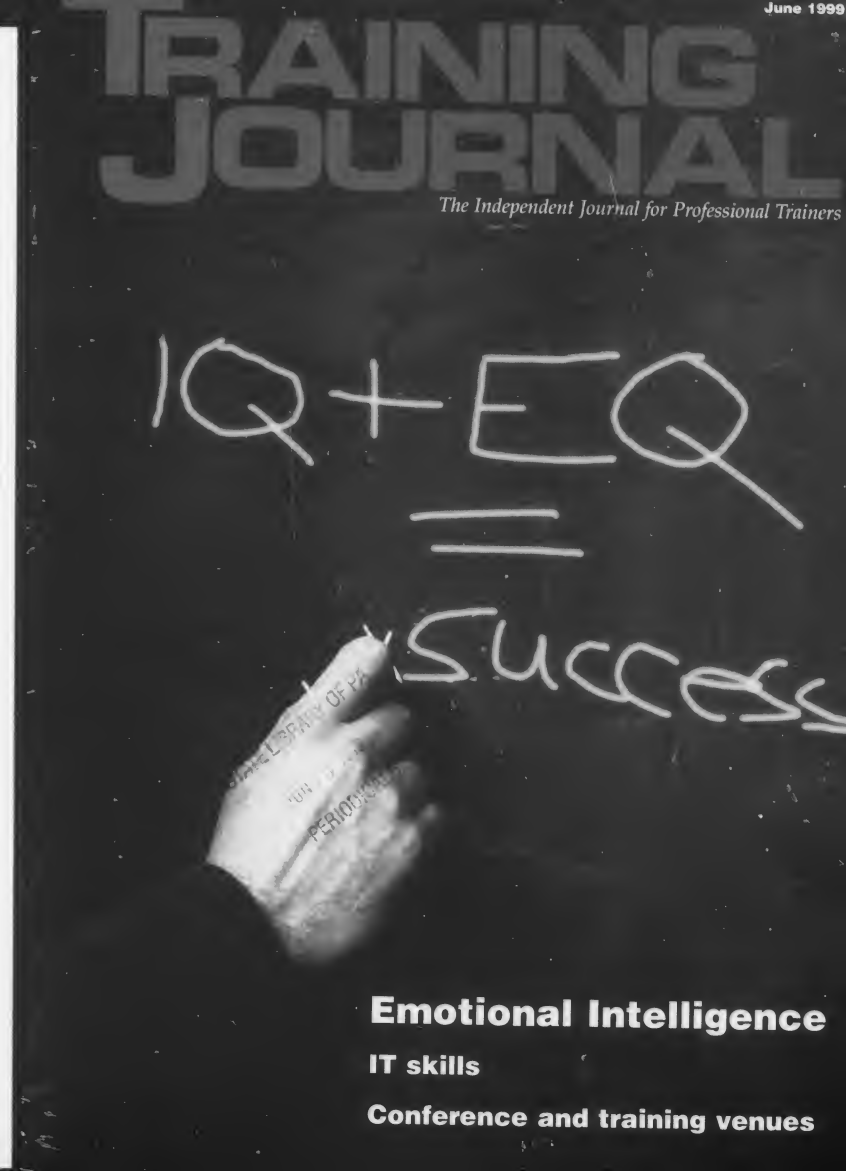
June 1999

TRAINING JOURNAL

The Independent Journal for Professional Trainers



Emotional Intelligence

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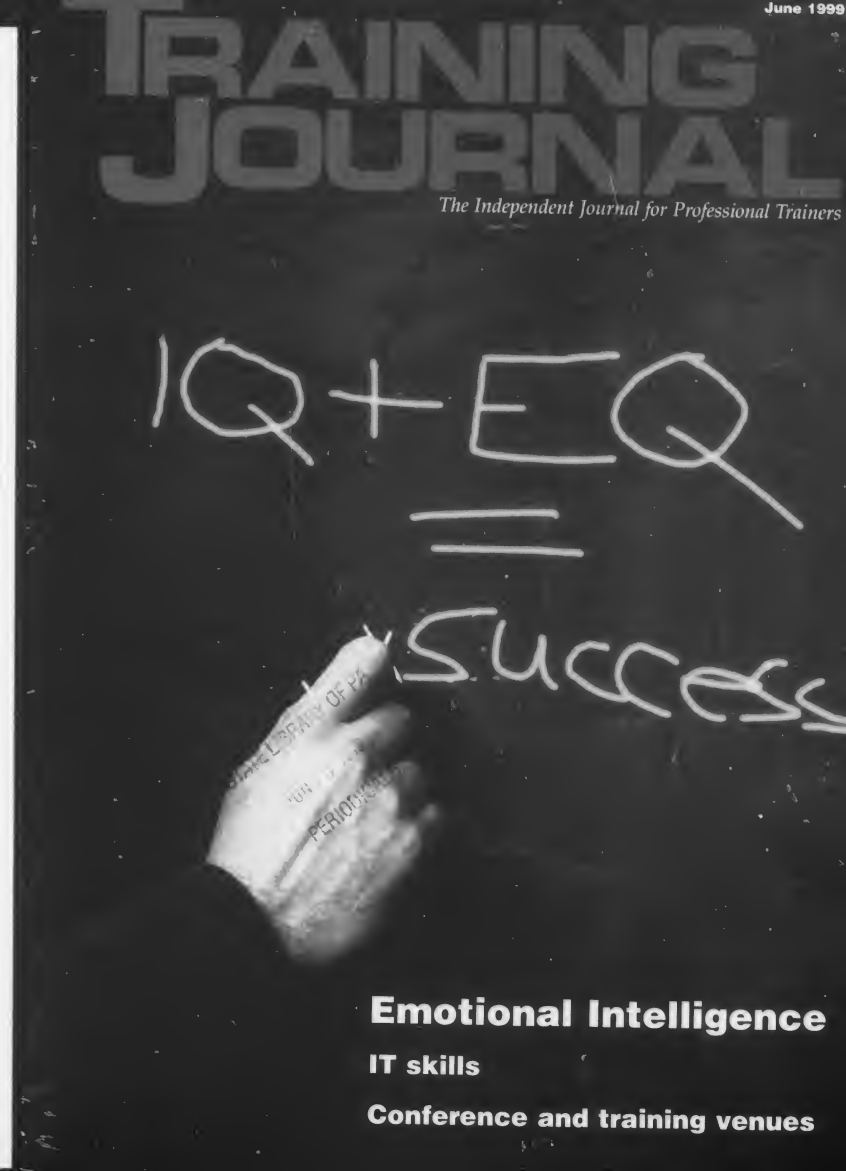

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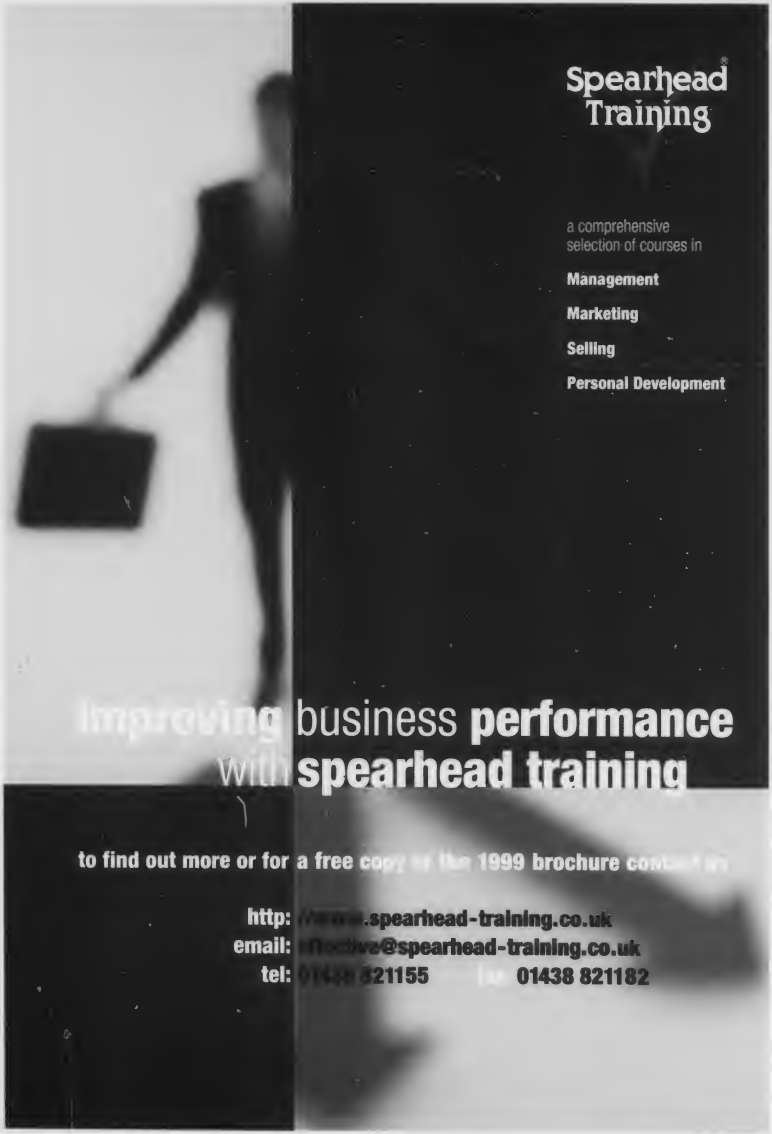
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Publisher and Managing Editor
Martin Delahoussaye
Telephone: 01353 665779, ext 235

Editorial Assistant
Kate Leadbeater
Telephone: 01353 665779, ext 218

Production Manager
Michael Stapleton
Telephone: 01353 665779, ext 219

Advertising
Sue Mennell
Telephone: 01353 665779, ext 211

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Fenman Limited
Clive House
The Business Park
Ely
Cambridgeshire
CB7 4EH
Telephone: 01353 665533
Fax: 01353 663644
E-mail:
trainingjournal@fenman.co.uk

Directors
Hugh Murray, BA, FIPD
Michael Herbert, MA, MSc
Catherine de Salvo, BA (Hons)

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Editorial

Does IPD have a leaning towards personnel and the wider human resource issues to the detriment of training and development in the UK? Should we return to the days when trainers were served by an independent institute dedicated to training and development? Or are the needs of trainers in particular and training in general well served by the current structure? Questions like these have been at the centre of a discussion thread for some weeks within UK-HRD – the e-mail based discussion forum managed and hosted by *Training Journal*. Turn to the UK-HRD Snippets section to read two quite different points of view on this continuing debate. And while you're there take a look at one consultant's altogether atypical vision of the training world.

Our feature articles this month include a fascinating insight into Emotional Intelligence, which is, according to the author Peter Storr 'set to become an increasingly important area for trainers'. He suggests that recognised methods for measuring intelligence, such as IQ tests, have failed to account for differences in success levels in individuals and points to Emotional Intelligence (EQ) as the 'something else' that could explain why certain people are more successful than others are.

The recent *Training Journal* readership survey provoked a magnificent response. Thank you to everyone who took time to complete it. We will publish the results and announce the winner of the survey prize draw in the July issue.

Speaking of July, don't forget the Training Solutions Show (6–8 July). Trade shows are ideal places to source new products and pick up new ideas. If you are one of the thousands, who will attend this show, please drop by and say hello. We'll be on stand H48.

Martin Delahoussaye
Publisher

LETTERS: Send your letters to me, at Training Journal, Clive House, The Business Park, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4EH, Fax: 01353 663644. E-mail: trainingjournal@fenman.co.uk

Latest people skills scoreboard gets under way in engineering

Engineering firms are being asked to provide information on their training activities to construct the 1999 People skills scoreboard for the engineering industry. The appeal follows last year's pioneering work by the Engineering and Marine Training Authority (EMTA) and the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF), in producing the first scoreboard for any sector.

Questionnaires have gone to 10,000 establishments, asking how much they spent on training in the 1998/99 financial year and seeking other related information. EMTA and the EEF will use the data to benchmark firms' investment in training and commitment to developing their people.

For further information, please contact Elaine Essery, EMTA; on 01923 238441; or Mark Swift, EEF; on 0171 222 7777.

Government told to protect training infrastructure

Less bureaucracy, improved quality and significant changes to the way Government-funded programmes are managed were just some of the key messages to come out the fourth 'Training for Britain' Conference held in Birmingham on 28 April 1999. Senior officials from the Department for Education and Employment heard examples of how bureaucracy and current funding arrangements are causing financial pressures for training providers contracted to deliver Government funded training programmes.

A strong message from the training world was an urgent need for the Government to give a clear picture on what is going to happen on output-related funding, as it will have a significant effect on current contracts, particularly Modern Apprenticeships.

More than 200 training providers from across the UK gathered to debate how the Government's extended Review of Training and Enterprise Council and post-16 education could be overhauled to achieve the Government's priorities for developing a world-class skilled workforce.

The Daily Telegraph/ Energis Customer Service Awards 1999 launched

The UK's most prestigious prize for excellence in customer service, *The Daily Telegraph*/ Energis Customer Service Awards: 1999 was launched on 11 May, with a major report into standards and trends in customer service published in *The Daily Telegraph*. Open to all businesses and organisations, large or small, in the public or private sectors, the Awards will showcase those that have demonstrated excellent customer service. Ray Ridgewell, Director of Customer Service at Energis said: 'Customer service is more important today than it has ever been. As competition across all sectors of business becomes more intense, providing outstanding customer services is essential. The public sector also faces unique customer challenges, and it is how they resolve them that will shape their future. The future depends on developing innovative solutions to customers' real needs. Judges will be looking for quality of customer care and attention to detail. There will also be marks for innovation and the use of telephone-based and Internet based customer service. Entries must be returned by 30 June 1999. Shortlisted organisations will then be visited by 'mystery shoppers' who will report to the distinguished panel of judges later in the summer. The awards will be presented at a gala event in London in September.

Full details and an entry pack can be obtained by calling the Awards Hotline, which is being provided by Energis on 0800 163910.

For further information, please contact Julian Oiller – The Daily Telegraph, *on 0171 538 6768; Sarah Farley – Energis on 0171 206 5800.*

Roffey Park appoints two new tutors

Roffey Park, the management development and research institute, has broadened the expertise and experience of its professional staff with the appointment of Suzanne Penn and Diane Moody as new development tutors. Both will help deliver Roffey's portfolio of residential development programmes, tailored in-company development initiatives and research.

Suzanne Penn previously worked in personnel and training for the Commission for Local Administration in England. Prior to this she spent ten years in personnel and development roles at Royal & Sun Alliance, latterly as an internal consultant specialising in management development and cultural change. Her particular strengths are in facilitating individual and organisational learning.

Diane Moody joins after three years as an independent learning and development consultant. A former lecturer at the University of Brighton's Centre for Training and Development, she also spent four years as a training consultant in the USA and UK. She has considerable experience in designing and facilitating a broad range of management development programmes.

For further details, please contact Roffey Park on 01293 851644; e-mail: infor@roffey-park.co.uk

BAOL launches quality mark for learning centres

The British Association for Open Learning (BAOL) has announced the launch of a fourth category of the BAOL Quality Mark, Learning Centres. Learning Centres have become one of the most popular ways of organising open and flexible learning. Achieving the award in this category will allow organisations with Open and Flexible Learning Centres to: increase their standing and credibility, demonstrate to customers that their service meets national guidelines, improve their performance in key areas and benchmark their activities against external criteria.

The first five organisations to sign up for the Learning Centre category are: The Automobile Association, Naval Support Command Training Organisation, Durham County Council, North Derbyshire TEC and Brighton College of Technology. Based on a framework of Criteria adapted from the Business Excellent Model, promoted by the British Quality Foundation (BQF), the BAOL Quality Mark has been designed to be relevant to the ways in which organisations provide, or are involved in, open and flexible learning. The other three categories available are Materials Development, Advice and Guidance, and Learner Support. Organisations interested in applying for the Quality Mark should contact the BAOL Office on 01462 485588.

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IN BRIEF

Call Centre College launches first national accredited training course

Call Centre College (CCC), the pioneer training and research organisation serving the call centre industry, has announced the launch of the first tailored learning programme to be validated by the OCR (Oxford University, Cambridge University, Royal Society of Arts) – the UK's leading accreditation body.

The Certificate in Call Centre Management, jointly developed by CCC and the Oxford Validated Awards team, utilises a range of learning methods designed to train managers to integrate both human and technical resources more effectively. The course includes intensive classroom-based learning, individual tuition and practical development projects. For further details, please contact Avi Levine, Editorial Associates on 01536 770554; e-mail: avi@webleicester.co.uk

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New ECITB approved centre

Philip Gunn & Associates Ltd has been accredited by the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) as an Approved Centre for the delivery of NVQs in Management, Project Management and Project Control. For further information, please contact Katie Matthewman on 01603 227600.

InterQuad becomes first UK independent training company to sign with Ten-TV

Technology Education Network TV (TEN-TV), the leading distance-learning training company, has signed InterQuad as its first independent UK technical training partner. TEN-TV provides its members with efficient information delivery and distance learning over the Internet and by satellite TV transmission. These new services will complement InterQuad's existing Total Training Management (TTM) solution, launched in March. For further details, please contact Ed Arnett, InterQuad Services Ltd on 01753 554344; e-mail: eda@interquad.co.uk

National 'Better Break' Service Campaign launched by Welcome Break and MSB

Welcome Break, the leading motorway services company, has commissioned Ascot-based Managing the Service Business (MSB) to design and implement a nationwide customer service improvement programme. The multi-staged programme is an integral part of Welcome Break's strategy to provide a 'Better Break' for customers. The strategy will provide more relaxing environments, value for money, increased choice and quality, and the highest standard of customer service.

The customer service initiative involves communication and training events throughout the country. Using a converted 40ft articulated trailer, the 'Better Break Roadshow' will visit all 23 motorway service areas over a period of three months. The purpose of these events is to communicate the exciting vision and customer service strategy in a participative, innovative and up-beat style, to over 4,000 employees. These interactive events include short presentations, video service scenarios and competitive exercises designed to inform, energise and motivate staff.

The second phase of the initiative focuses on training. All Welcome Break employees will receive training in communication skills, team building and customer awareness. MSB will be training general managers, head of departments and assistant managers, and then teams of 'Welcome Break Service Champions'. These teams will be drawn from a mix of employees and will go on to train the entire Welcome Break team in each motorway service area.

For further information, please contact Andrew Shapiro, Director of Communications, MSB on 01344 876300; e-mail: andrew.shapiro@msb-ltd.co.uk Alternatively, contact Anne Robson, HR Director, Welcome Break on 01908 698 700.

Maxim Training delivers the UK's most extensive range of on-line management courses

On-line delivery of training is happening now, but the potential growth is enormous and Brighton-based Maxim Training, one of the UK's premier training experts, is set to meet demand. Available now, management skills on-line is the UK's most comprehensive range of 'desktop' generic on-line training.

Designed for headache-free installation and operation, its practical just-in-time approach and direct link to occupations standards (Management NVQs, Investors in People (IIP) or Small Firms Standards (SFEDI)) makes management skills-on-line an indispensable resource for large, small, private and public sector organisations. It is cost effective, focused and supports a recognised set of vocational qualifications.

For further information, please contact Tracy Drewett@Maxim Training on 01273 827788; e-mail: tracyd@maximtraining.com

Appointment made for Masterclass Management training programme

TACK Training International has appointed Professor Amin Rajan as non-executive chairman of its Masterclass Management Training programme. Masterclass, the management and finance division of TACK, offers fundamental courses for those new to management, as well as leadership programmes for those at senior level. 'We are delighted to welcome Amin Rajan, who brings flair and world-class experience to the continuing development of our Masterclass portfolio,' says Eric Pillinger, managing director, TACK Training International.

For further information on Masterclass Management Training on 010494 766 611.

To advertise in *Training Journal*
Contact Sue Mennell Telephone: 01353 665779 extension 211
Fax: 01353 663644 e-mail: sue@fenman.co.uk

Peter Honey BA (Psych), D Litt, Dip Ed, FIMC, FIPD, is a Chartered Psychologist and Management Consultant. He may be contacted on 01628 633946; fax 01628 633262; e-mail peterhoney@peterhoney.co.uk

Education, education, education!

I've just returned hotfoot from a conference in Cardiff* where we cast ourselves forward to the year 2030 and worked on our vision for education. Apart from the usual difficulties of weaning people off gripes about problems with today's education system (insufficient funding, too much bureaucracy, teachers undervalued, too much elitism, an over-cluttered national curriculum and so on) several fascinating themes emerged.

The first was the tendency to place more emphasis on teachers and teaching than on learners and learning. This led to all the usual stuff about treating learners (even adolescent ones) more like customers with needs, wants, freedom of choice and buying power. One radical idea was to abolish compulsory education after, say, the age of 11, issue everyone with learning vouchers, provide guidance on where to find what learners want to learn and thus create a learner's market. People electing to remain in formal education would therefore be there because they wanted to be with all the advantages that come with being self-motivated.

The second strong theme to emerge amounted to a rebellion against the current emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge. The argument advanced was that since information was increasing so rapidly it was no longer possible either to know enough or to keep up to date.

The vision for 2030 imagined a total shift in priorities away from cramming facts and an over-cluttered curriculum towards learning how to learn and the skills involved in locating information when it was needed. It was recognised that learning skills never become obsolete and are the most fundamental of the so-called life skills. Professionally I need hardly say how delighted I was to see people signing up for this. Selfishly it allows me to escape from something I have never been keen on – memorising and retaining lots of information on the off-chance that it might come in handy one day. I've always hated programmes on TV such as *University Challenge*, partly because they remind me of my ignorance and partly because they put the retention and rapid retrieval of knowledge on an undeserved pedestal. By 2030 (I'm not sure I can wait that long) perhaps quiz programmes will reward contestants for *finding* the answer, not for *knowing* the answer. One speaker at the conference argued for a reversal of the usual KSA to ASK (Attitudes first, Skills second, Knowledge third in priority).

The third strong theme hinged on what we know about the developments of the brain. Without going into detail (a couple of the speakers at the conference did!) it seems that the brain is a total, complex system where the inter-connections between the various parts are more important than the parts themselves. Furthermore, from birth to age 5 the brain is busy wiring itself and we were given numerous examples showing that early learning lays down the infrastructure upon which all later learning depends. If some wiring connections are not made at this stage in the brain's development, no amount of later learning can, it seems, completely make up the shortfall. Putting it crudely; the brain can't catch up because the necessary circuitry simply isn't there. Obviously, we've a long way to go before we fully understand how the brain develops and functions, but the staggering implication is that we need a massive shift in educational resources. Creating appropriate learning environments for the under 5s will be (is) far more important than the curriculum from 5 onwards. The role, therefore, of parents in those early years is even more important than we have always known it to be. Radical suggestions put forward at the conference were along the lines of an Investors in Parents Award, with child allowance conditional on qualifying for recognition or getting a parents' 'licence'.

Finally, there was much talk of barriers to learning and what it was about schooling that alienates so many young people making it less likely they will embrace life-long learning. The biggest impediments were all motivational (the 'want' part in the well-known formula 'what you *can* do plus what you *want* to do plus what you are *allowed* to do equals what you *do* do'). One view held was that human beings are born with a natural passion for learning, which is sapped by various bruising experiences. Another view was that self-confidence and really wanting to learn were themselves products of early learning. Depending on your viewpoint, we have to stop de-motivating learners or start motivating learners. If in doubt, let's do both!

As ever, the big question for me is what comes first; wanting to do something and therefore doing it, or being made to do something and therefore wanting to do it? Giving learners more choice assumes the first is true. Compulsory education gambles that the second is true – if, that is, it is done well enough. Hey ho! Roll on 2030.

*Organised by the Campaign for Learning.

Choosing that ideal training venue

When it comes to choosing a suitable venue for training events, organisers can be faced with the difficulty in deciding which of the many conference centres and hotels would best fulfil their needs. **Gill Smillie** gives a valuable insight into training venue trends and offers tips on venue selection.

With something of a hiatus during the recession of the early 1990's, the growth in demand for suitable training venues has developed quite dramatically over the past twenty years.

There is a cyclical process whereby clients acquire their own training facilities by purchasing or leasing residential accommodation for their sole use, and then axe it as a cost saving exercise when staff levels drop.

Currently the trend is towards acquiring their own facility, as there is a shortfall in availability of high quality commercial venues able to offer facilities for training programmes. This, of course, also drives prices higher by the simple law of supply and demand and costs can be greater controlled within one's own facility.

Another key trend to evolve in the last few years is the short lead time that organisers are giving themselves when seeking locations for training programmes. At Conference Venues Countrywide (CVC), the average lead time is currently around six to ten weeks although, thankfully, there are companies who are still planning long-term and thinking six months to a year in advance.

It is this short-term planning which leads to the shortfall mentioned before and a subsequent hardening of rate. Venues are disinclined to negotiate unless the booking is very desirable (for instance running at a weekend or close to a bank holiday), or particularly large in scope. The moral here is think ahead!

Gill Smillie is the Chief Executive of Conference Venues Countrywide (CVC) and co-founder of the Meetings Industry Association. She has been involved in venue-finding for twenty years and CVC was established in 1983. Gill may be contacted via Harrison Cowley on 0161 437 4474.

Forward Planning

Before choosing a suitable venue for a training programme, it is worth considering the following:

- What type of delegate is attending the event and at what level of management are they?
- How many meeting rooms are required (main training room and syndicate rooms) and what layout is going to be used? Are those rooms required to be available through 24 hours, or can the room be vacated in the evening?
- Is there a need for any private meals during the event?
- What audio visual equipment is required?
- Should the venue have grounds/gardens for outdoor activities? Is there provision of fitness facilities?
- In what sort of environment would the programme best operate – one that has a 'buzz' or one that is quiet, focused and free from distraction?
- Define the best geographic location for the event. Would it be better to be in or near a town, or would somewhere in the countryside be more appropriate?
- Most importantly, what budget is available to cover the venue cost?

If you can answer all (or most) of the above it will help define the search. It is obviously important to put delegates into an environment in which they will not feel uncomfortable and out of place. It is also important to keep travelling time to a minimum and decide whether a hotel or purpose-built conference centre would be more appropriate.

Hotel rooms

Most of the hotel groups are recognising that training is big business, and are pro-

Arranging a training venue takes time. The time it takes to pick up the phone.

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ducing a conference 'brand' which will offer rooms fitted out for training programmes, with comfortable chairs and hard-top tables.

On the whole, hotels recognise that training programmes require syndicate rooms, lots of flipcharts and at the very least an overhead projector.

Unfortunately, there are fewer of these type of rooms than there are standard conference rooms, so you may find yourself allocated a room which is used for meetings during the day but also has to become a room for dinner after hours – so the decor is a bit too distracting and the lighting not powerful enough for training use. Furthermore, you sit on a standard banqueting chair without arms (most uncomfortable for long periods) and work at a narrow table covered with baize.

On the whole, hotels recognise that training programmes require syndicate rooms, lots of flipcharts and at the very least an overhead projector. Whilst prepared to provide these, all too often the syndicate rooms are converted bedrooms for which charges are made of around £100 to £150 per day. So what can look like a competitive package on paper can be inflated dramatically once you add up all the costs.

In a hotel, however, there is probably more of a 'buzz' in the evening, with members of the public coming in to use restaurants and bars and this may suit some delegates.

Training centres

Conference centres originated in the USA in the 1940s and are designed to accommodate programmes where a dedicated, focused environment is required. All business is pre-booked and generally speaking the events which take place in these venues are for training, or some type of event where a quiet environment is critical to the success of the programme.

In a conference centre a meeting room is just that – it is not used for any other purpose so the chairs tend to be office-type with arms and back support, the tables have hard tops, there is high quality adjustable lighting and integral audio-visual aids.

Delegate rooms at conference centres generally include a certain number of syndicate rooms to the ratio of delegates and a reasonable number of flipcharts. Some centres include CCTV in the delegate rate and some are even including sophisticated equipment such a data projection. Most trainers find these centres ideal and once introduced to the product, usually remain faithful.

There has been a substantial growth in the number of such centres in the UK over the last 15 years and the best of these offer a superb facility for training programmes with comfort levels equivalent to a four star hotel.

As with anything in life – you get what you pay for in terms of comfort and quality. Twenty-four-hour package rates can vary from £95 to £150 in conference centres and £200 plus in the more de-luxe hotels. VAT is generally an additional item in the conference centre budgeting, but included with most hotels.

The items covered by the delegate rate can be vital to achieving your budget, so always ask for a breakdown of content. Normally a package rate covers at a minimum per day: bedroom accommodation, meals, two refreshment breaks and your main training room.

Academic venues

If you have a more limited budget, then you could consider using academic conference venues – student rooms have changed a lot in recent years. Many now have en-suite bathrooms and are built to a high specification. You can expect delegate rates of between £45 and £95 plus VAT, although you will probably have to pay extra for syndicate rooms and audio-visual aids.

Choosing a venue

Having given your requirements a lot of thought, how do you go about choosing the ideal venue?

There is plenty of help available, including venue-finding companies who offer a booking service at no charge to the client and conference directories like the Conference Blue Book. Innumerable guides are also available on CD ROM and, of course, the world wide web. Most of the hotel groups also have a central sales office you can call.

Assessing venue quality

Judging the quality of the venue in advance can be tricky. If you use an agency, check they have visited the venue they are recommending and are familiar with the building and the staff.

If you use a guide book or the Internet, you would be advised to visit the venue if you can. A 'virtual' tour on the Web gives no clue as to the quality of the furnishings or the attitude of service staff. Nothing can be as misleading as a glossy brochure.

The items covered by the delegate rate can be vital to achieving your budget, so always ask for a breakdown of content.

Don't be afraid to ask for credentials. Has the venue undergone any of the quality assurance programmes such as Investors in People or Hospitality Assured for the meetings industry? Is the venue (or indeed your agent) a member of the Meetings Industry Association (MIA)? With over 400 members, the MIA is taking centre stage these days in terms of industry professionalism, and if the venue is not a member it is worth asking why.

Conclusion

Selecting the appropriate venue for a training programme is as important as the course content. Get it wrong and the success of the whole event can be jeopardised. It's worth investing time and effort in making sure you have selected the right one for you and your delegates.' ■

Notes:
The Meetings Industry Association (MIA) is the recognised professional trade organisation for the conference industry in GB and Ireland. It is committed to improving standards throughout the meetings industry and aims to give conference buyers the reassurance of consistent/exemplary standards. It is governed by a voluntary council of industry representatives including meeting venues of all types and specialist service suppliers.

A model for successful implementation of distance learning strategies

This article, by **Professor Stephen Brown**, is based on a paper first presented at the Eden Conference: 'Training Professionals at a Distance: The Reuters case study', Proceedings of the European Distance Education Network (Eden) Conference, p.126–129, 8–10 July 1996, Poitiers, France.

Professor Stephen Brown is Head of the Department of Learning Technologies and Director of the International Institute for Electronic Library Research at De Montfort University. He is also Manager of Continuing Vocational Education at De Montfort. He has published widely in the fields of distance learning, training and design education. His most recent book, Open and Distance Learning: Case Studies from Industry and Education *(Kogan Page, 1997) reviews the lessons to be learned from trying to integrate distance learning strategies with established face-to-face teaching methods. He may be contacted on 0116 257 7173; fax: 0116 250 6101; e-mail: sbrown@dmu.ac.uk*

Reuters operates a global foreign exchange trading business using high-speed communications networks. These operations are fast, efficient and respond flexibly to changing client needs, and they deal in billions of pounds worth of transactions worldwide. Here, we examine the reasoning behind the decision to break with conventional training methods and opt for open/distance learning. This article describes the development process, highlighting learning points for other organisations thinking of adopting ODL as part of their training strategy and it reviews the benefits of the training package for the company. The training materials deliberately exploit known models and theories of learning behaviour, and have been designed in such a way that the computer-based exercises and simulations can easily be updated by the client, without further recourse to the software developers.

The training context

Reuters is probably best known for worldwide news gathering and reporting services, but its interest in information services is much wider. In particular it has developed specialist on-line services for global financial traders known as Transaction Product Services. These services must be fast, efficient, reliable and flexible to changing client needs. The administration systems and support services behind the organisation must provide a cost-effective and accurate audit trail ensuring the security of billions of pounds worth of transactions each year. Training of the administration staff who support the Reuters Transaction Product Services is therefore highly critical.

The case for distance learning has been made despite the relatively low numbers involved.

Why distance learning?

Reuters Transaction Product Services are constantly changing. There is a need, therefore, for a training strategy that can be set up very rapidly and which is easily updatable to keep pace with this rapid change. Conventional face-to-face training methods are flexible enough to deal with change but the Reuters training context made the traditional approach difficult and challenged its cost-effectiveness.

- It needed to train a dispersed worldwide audience of over 200 administration staff.
- Sending trainers to all staff locations, or sending delegates to a training centre across national boundaries was a lengthy and expensive process.

The perception in Reuters was that distance learning could complement classroom training; and that it could be used for knowledge acquisition and for developing skills where the skill can be simulated to provide opportunities for learning through observation and practice. It was also believed that distance learning could improve the transfer of learning to the workplace and function as 'on-the-job' performance support. Reuters decided, therefore, to explore the potential of distance learning to solve these problems by setting up a pilot training programme.

Training design

The primary target audience was the staff who maintain and support the services used by customers worldwide. However, by moving to distance learning, Reuters anticipated that for very little additional cost it would be able to include administration line management in the training process also. Hitherto it would have been prohibitively expensive to fly international managers to the UK for training updates.

The training aims were to:

- provide an overview of the three Transaction Product Services systems
- provide training on the specific system applications
- develop reliable summative assessments for accreditation
- establish effective communications channels for training information and issues.

Critical success factors were identified as follows:

- users would be motivated to read and learn
- users could identify their own learning needs
- users could access specific information directly

Component	Functions	Format
Printed workbooks	• Overview of the systems: – what they are for – why they are important – what they look like – how they work – when to intervene – how to intervene. • Self-assessment to determine: – individual learning needs – understanding of individual modules. • Summative assessment for accreditation.	Open learning, flexible study, activity based. Multiple choice questions and exercises with model answers and references back to relevant text sections.
Audio cassette	• Explanation of screen layouts. • Description of system processes.	Verbal commentary on screen dumps and schematic diagrams.
e-mail	• Learner testing and feedback. • Flagging problems to the line manager.	Computer marked, multiple-choice questions, with automatic feedback to students and (if scores are unsatisfactory) to line managers.
Computer-aided training	• Overview of how to use systems. • Practical expenence of using systems. • Performance testing.	Simulation, guided exercises, with supporting, context sensitive explanations and demonstrations.
Computer conferencing	• Forum for syndicate working and self-help groups across geographical and time boundaries. • Opportunity for trainers to observe, analyse and respond to common learner problems. • Notification of system updates and other new information.	Open access conference using proprietary software, e.g. Lotus Notes.

Figure 1. The five elements of an integrated package

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- users could get updates and refresher courses on demand
- user demands on Reuters UKI training would be minimised.

The initial brief specified two media components: text and computer-assisted training (CAT). This was extended to include audio cassette, e-mail and computer-based conferencing, in order to best satisfy the critical success factors identified above. The five proposed elements were to be delivered as a single, integrated package as shown in Figure 1.

Early analysis of the training context revealed, however, that the hardware systems running Transaction Product Services were customised terminals, connected to dedicated networks for reasons of high security and reliability. It was not company policy to allow these machines to be connected to public access networks. Normal business computing provision varied enormously from country to country, making it hard to find a common systems standard, and again there was a reluctance to allow company machines to be connected to potentially insecure public access networks. The e-mail and conferencing aspects of the package were therefore dropped and their functions incorporated, where possible, into the other elements.

In the end, two workbooks were developed as self-study teaching texts of approximately three hours' study time each. These provide an overview for managers and new system users. The audio cassette describes some of the processes and gives an overview of management issues relating to the operation of the system. The CAT component was developed as a single disk but in two parts.

1 A guided simulation in which learners observe how the system works.
2 A simulation exercise in which learners have to enter data correctly into the system to perform various administration tasks.

The front end to both parts is a process map that shows the overall stages involved in performing key aspects of system administration, such as adding new users, who should perform them and how they relate to other roles in the process. Learners can use the map to enter the process at any stage, from the perspective of any role. Processes can be followed logically from end to end through the various roles, or the sequence of tasks performed by a single role can be followed.

Rationale

The stated training needs span a wide range of levels of learning objectives[1] from simple recall to analysis and cognitive skills, and this is reflected in the multi-component design of the training materials. The various media components have been designed to accommodate a variety of learning strategies. The didactic tutorial style of the workbooks is designed to suit 'theorists', – learners who prefer to pick up the theoretical principles before applying them to real life problems.[2] Within the workbooks there is a logical sequence to the topics. However, these study routes are not mandatory. Learners are free to work through the material flexibly. So while 'serialists' will find a well-signposted linear route through the package, 'holists' can browse around the material to build up an overview, then fill in the details as they choose.[3,4] The CAT observation exercises facilitate reflectors – those who prefer to learn by example and observation, while the simulation exercises on the disk are designed to suit 'activists' – those who prefer to jump in with both feet and learn from their mistakes.[2] The multi-route front-end process map offers learners the opportunity to alternate between different approaches to the material.

Learners are free to work through the material flexibly. So while 'serialists' will find a well-signposted linear route through the package, 'holists' can browse around the material to build up an overview, then fill in the details as they choose.

Technical innovation

The core of the CAT element is a database of roles, tasks and processes. This stores all the information necessary to create in real time the process overview map and the underlying task sequences. When a user specifies a particular viewpoint or task sequence, the relevant screens are created instantly from the database. The benefits of this approach are twofold.

1 By avoiding the need to store actual screen layouts, the data storage requirements of the package are kept low (the whole application fits on a single 1.4 Mb floppy disk).
2 By holding the data in a database rather than as actual screens, changes to the system can be effected quickly and reliably.

The application is written in Microsoft Visual Basic, which can be easily updated by the client without further recourse to the software developers. This has two further benefits.

1 The client can make changes rapidly in response to keeping pace with changes in the Transaction Product Services.
2 Small, frequent changes do not necessitate costly software updating contracts.

Results

Reuters has received excellent feedback from users since the launch in February 1995 of the new training materials. Demand exceeded the original estimate of 200 copies by 50 per cent. On the strength of this success Reuters has commissioned another similar package and, as a corporate intranet was developed, the training has been moved on to the network for easier distribution, access and updating. This has enabled the networking aspects of the original proposal to be incorporated.

Conclusion

The switch to distance learning for selected training programmes has resulted in the following real benefits for the company.

- Low-cost delivery to geographically dispersed target populations.
- Widening of access to training for individuals excluded from conventional training on cost grounds.
- Enhanced consistency of training.
- Just-in-time availability of training for new recruits.
- Availability of on-the-job refresher training and continuous professional updating.

This has been achieved without the loss of obvious advantages of conventional face-to-face training such as rapid and flexible updating of course content.

The Reuters case study provides a model for successful implementation of

distance learning strategies: clear training objectives, an obvious need, informed and enthusiastically involved client. The case for distance learning has been made despite the relatively low numbers involved. Critical factors were the high cost of other options, such as flying delegates to a single training location, and the high cost of failure: ineffective system administration could cost billions of pounds.

The stated training needs span a wide range of levels of learning objectives[1] from simple recall to analysis and cognitive skills, and this is reflected in the multi-component design of the training materials.

In addition, it has raised a number of issues observed elsewhere.[5,6] This case study clearly highlights the importance of the organisational context for training design. The final design was influenced heavily by the scale of the company, the rate of change to the infrastructure and the company culture concerning how that infrastructure should be used.

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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In March 1998 the Government published its pathfinder prospectus for the University for Industry. The heart of the proposal was a ground breaking vision for a public/private partnership which would have the twin aims of stimulating demand for, and improving access, to knowledge. It would be dedicated to creating a culture of lifelong learning throughout the working community.

That vision is now becoming a reality

- Ufi Ltd established from 1st April
- Learning needs of businesses and individuals researched
- Existing private and public sector learning initiatives bench-marked
- High quality learning materials commissioned.

The next step is to establish a unique network of learning centres to attract a new generation of learners when Ufi becomes fully operational in autumn 2000.

Learning Centres will:

- be the point of public access to Ufi services
- provide local learning facilities, especially PC workstations
- deliver Ufi learner support services

Invitation

Ufi will not run these centres directly but is now inviting consortia [HUBS] of educational, training and business providers to present proposals to run a network of not less than 10 centres each. Over the next year we expect to establish around 100 HUBS.

HUBS will:

- oversee the operation of Ufi learning centres in their area [some HUBS may include company related centres]
- provide IT and networking services for learning centres
- provide, where appropriate, access to Ufi materials from computer access points

A full description of Ufi's requirements, the application procedure and the selection process can be found on our website http://www.ufiltd.co.uk under Learning Centres.
Hard copies of our brochure can be obtained by calling the Ufi orderline on 0141 300 4924 and asking for UFILCD.
Responses to all questions will be posted on the website on a regular basis.
We will be holding a series of informal regional briefings during June; full details will be published on the website.

The deadline for receipt of outline proposals is 16th July.

Ufi is an equal opportunities employer

Emotional Intelligence

Research indicates that job success cannot be predicted by IQ alone. Here **Peter Storr** discusses Emotional Intelligence and how it can be used to identify individuals with potential.

As experienced test users will be aware, components of the concept of IQ such as verbal and numerical reasoning have a valid contribution to make in attempting to predict job success. IQ and general reasoning ability are only part of the story, however. Research generally suggests that between 10 and 20 per cent of the variation in measures of job success can be attributed to levels of reasoning ability.

This is not a negligible percentage – it gives us extremely useful information. It is also clear that personality plays an important role, although predictive validity studies are somewhat harder to undertake. Nevertheless, it is clear that some aspects of personality as measured by, say, the 16PF5 Questionnaire can give an indication of leadership style, for example, or ways of coping with pressure.

There is, however, something else. This 'something else' is not a new concept; indeed, it has been called various things over the last 80 years or so. However, it is the recent work of Daniel Goleman that appears to have captured the public's imagination, with his conceptualisation of a range of 'people skills' termed Emotional Intelligence.

It is generally acknowledged that the construct itself was first labelled Emotional Intelligence by Salovey & Mayer in 1990, but in the public's eye, the concept now belongs with Goleman, who has written two books on the subject.[1]

Why Emotional Intelligence matters for trainers

Emotional Intelligence is set to become an increasingly important area for trainers for three main reasons.

1 As a result of new developments in physiological research. Brain scan imaging has started to identify the pathways through the various parts of the brain that electrical activity follows under particular circumstances. Research has shown that patterns of behaviour impacting upon Emotional Intelligence can be learned and unlearned in adult life to a far greater extent than any of the elements of IQ. Increased self-awareness is part of the story in developing greater Emotional Intelligence but there are significant opportunities for formal training.
2 Companies and individuals are becoming ever more interested in their search for competitive advantage and recognise the need to balance rational and emotional aspects of strategy.
3 A major driver of interest has been the failure of IQ alone to account sufficiently for differences in success levels in individuals, both in an educational and an organisational context.

Emotional Intelligence affects the workplace

One of Goleman's central premises is that people who have a good mix of IQ and EQ, as it is becoming known, tend to be more successful in their chosen fields than those who have outstanding IQ and underdeveloped EQ.

Hard research in an organisational context is, unfortunately, still uncommon. Studies have, however, demonstrated a link between aspects of emotional intelligence and a differentiation between high and average performers.

This essentially is Goleman's core proposition:

IQ + EQ = Success

Peter Storr is a Training Consultant with ASE, one of the UK's leading providers of workplace assessments, training and consultancy services. ASE can be contacted at Hanover House, 2–4 Sheet Street, Windsor, Berks SL4 1BG. Telephone: 01753 850333; fax: 01753 620972; e-mail: peter.storr@nfer-nelson.co.uk

Goleman gives us a broad definition of the essence of Emotional Intelligence:

- knowing what you are feeling and being able to handle those feelings without having them swamp you
- being able to motivate yourself to get jobs done, be creative and perform at your peak
- sensing what others are feeling, and handling relationships effectively.

Companies and individuals recognise the need to balance rational and emotional aspects of strategy.

These three areas have been distilled from a set of core competencies identified in Goleman's second book. He identifies the most salient areas as self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills. Our emotional intelligence is shaped by a combination of heredity and environment, but it differs from IQ in that, it is argued, it can also be developed in adulthood.

Measuring Emotional Intelligence

It is a matter of debate whether a 'paper and pencil' only test can adequately reflect this complicated construct. However, as the construct addresses individual traits, values and behaviours, the answer may lie in taking a competency-based approach, ideally as part of a multi-source assessment.

There is a clear parallel with the way a competency is defined and the way in which emotional intelligence is said to manifest. Indeed, most of the literature talks about EQ in competency-based language. In *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman cites a huge study of 286 organisations worldwide where job competencies of star performers in these organisations at every level were analysed. Of the 20 or so common competencies identified, all but three were emotional competencies, as defined not just by Goleman but also by such eminent researchers as Boyatzis and McClelland.

It was this parallel that led Henley Management College's Dr Malcolm Higgs, Client Director, and Professor Vic Dulewicz, Head of the Faculty of Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour (and the author of ASE's *Personal Competency Framework and the Job Competencies Survey*), to research into the design of a competency-based Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire.

In a study of the competencies that predicted success as a manager, they found 16 emotional competencies that made a difference, which were shown to map onto six supra-competencies. When they looked at the overall predictors of success by performing multiple regression analyses, they found that:

- 27 per cent of the variance of success were predicted by IQ
- 16 per cent were predicted by other management competencies
- 36 per cent were predicted by the emotional competencies.

Furthermore, a combination of all three accounted for 71 per cent of the variance. This is probably the maximum that can be explained when using this type of data.

The most successful managers tended to be those who combined a high level of emotional intelligence and an above average level of intellectual intelligence. The results gave a tentative confirmation of Goleman's core proposition that 'it is a combination of IQ and Emotional Intelligence which determines life success'.

Our emotional intelligence is shaped by a combination of heredity and environment.

The second stage of the research was the design of a tool to measure EQ – an Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire. The questionnaire items were derived from a literature survey of over 60 books and articles, and the structure of the various components of EQ was derived from the competency study. A 70-item questionnaire was the result, which was piloted on 200 experienced managers on Henley Management College's MBA and executive programmes during 1998.

Reliability coefficients were all within acceptable levels (alpha coefficients of between 0.6 and 0.8) and construct validity was looked at using various personality measures. Overall, there appeared to be wide-ranging support for the constructs. As far as predictive validity goes, the EQ measure correlated strongly (0.49) with the overall EQ competencies identified in their original study. This provides a direct link from the questionnaire to the background research.

The most successful managers tended to be those who combined a high level of emotional intelligence and an above average level of intellectual intelligence.

There are seven elements that broadly relate to the original supra-competencies identified in the original study, and the respondent obtains a sten score on each of these elements. There is also a total EQ score, which is the sum of all the seven individual elements. These seven elements are creatively labelled A-G, and are as follows.

- **Self-awareness** of own feelings and ability to control them. Includes a degree of belief in one's own ability to manage emotions and to control one's impact in a work environment.
- **Emotional resilience;** the ability to perform consistently in a range of situations under pressure and to appropriately adapt behaviour. Includes ability to retain focus in the face of personal criticism.
- **Motivation;** drive and energy to achieve results, to make an impact and to balance short- and long-term goals.
- **Interpersonal sensitivity** with respect to other's needs and perceptions when arriving at decisions.
- **Influence;** the ability to persuade others to change a viewpoint where necessary.
- **Decisiveness;** the ability to arrive at clear decisions and to drive their implementation when presented with incomplete or ambiguous information, using both logic and emotion.
- **Conscientiousness and integrity;** the ability to display clear commitment to a course of action in the face of challenge, and to match words and deeds.

The results of each question are input into a computer-based data entry system from which a narrative report emerges.

Administrators of the questionnaire must be fully trained in interpreting the reports (BPS level A certificate or equivalent, and a dedicated one-day training course), and must offer interpretation and feedback to individuals. Key to the assessment process is the identification of potential areas for development and the planning of appropriate training.

There is a range of possibilities for developing Emotional Intelligence in individuals, both directly in the workplace and through personal coaching and training.

Using the results

The authors see this as primarily a management development tool, as the norm table is based on a sample of 200 managers. As further norm groups are added, the tool will be applicable to a wide range of employers, including sales and customer service functions. There are, of course, many other applications – perhaps in certain selection decisions, team-building exercises, assessment- and development-centre exercises, counselling or mentoring, as well as the identification of training needs.

There is a range of possibilities for developing Emotional Intelligence in individuals, both directly in the workplace and through personal coaching and training. Some of the relevant applications for trainers include:

- effective performance management
- use of feedback from colleagues and customers through 360° appraisal tools
- use of personality tools to increase self-awareness and the impact of one's approach on others
- feedback and listening skills training
- understanding what motivates us.

Conclusion

Anecdotal evidence, major case studies and new research show that Emotional Intelligence is a major factor in predicting success in organisations.

There is a great deal of theoretical background behind the construct from many academic and medical disciplines, but that theory is grounded in common sense and relates to daily experience

Emotional Intelligence as measured by the new questionnaire can be developed and enhanced through formal training to a far greater extent than IQ. ■

*ASE offers a number of assessment and development tools for training and development specialists that can dovetail into the Emotional Intelligence assessment process, as well as providing training in their use.

Reference

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Training Solutions & The IT Training Show
NEC Birmingham 6–8 July 1999

The 1999 Training Solutions & The IT Training Show will take place from 6–8 July at the NEC, Birmingham. Last year the exhibition drew crowds of 3,677 and this year the organisers are expecting over 4,000 people to attend.

New to the 1999 show are Deloitte Touche, Philip Gunn & Associates, PC Coaching, touch-type trainers Comprix, and Thinking Dimensions from South Africa.

Other key exhibitors to return are interactive role players Actors In Management, Sun Microsystems, CSA Management Consultants, Sift Plc, Paul Jackson Associates, Oddball Training, Forward Vision Solutions, Fresh Sales & Marketing Solutions, Keyturn Training Limited, Visage Group, Winning Moves, Institute of Management and The Institute of Directors.

Running alongside the three-day exhibition will be Training Solutions and the IT Training Conference. The main Training Solutions programme will feature trainers from a range of industries who will cover 'intranet training', 'training senior management', 'linking training to business strategy' and 'why evaluate?'.

The IT Training Conference includes speakers from Unisys, Norwich Union, Shell Services International, BT, Ford Motor Company, British Airways and independent expert Anthony Thorpe.

New at Training Solutions 1999 is a 'Masterclasses' programme to train the trainer. Among those presenting advanced seminars are Ian Banyard from McKenna Breen and Kate Hopkinson, co-author of *The Personal Management Handbook*. The workshops will develop practical skills for training professionals in NLP techniques, learning preferences, instructional design, learning biases and using the Emotional Quotient.

Further information is available from Brintex Limited, 32 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SS; 0171 973 6401; fax 0171 233 5054; e-mail: training@hemming-group.co.uk; http://www.training-shows.co.uk

CBT: just in time

Alistair Morrison advocates computer-based training as a just-in-time method of training.

Everyone knows that it's important for people to receive training at exactly the right time.

Give training too early and the chances are that the learner will have forgotten the content of the programme by the time it's required. Give training too late and the learning will already have taken place by trial and error – with its usual corollary of the instillation of bad habits, upset clients and general frustration all round. Either way is a recipe for disaster.

Recognising the need to give training at exactly the right time has never been more important. Most organisations are currently engaged in regular, if not continuous, change. New products, working practices and IT systems are being implemented at an ever-increasing rate. Yet, no matter the scale of the investment to design and develop the change agent, it is the ability of the organisation's people to operate effectively within it that determines the return on investment.

Fortunately, however, the trainer has never been in a better position to influence training strategies or had a better set of tools to meet the variable needs of the modern organisation.

The importance placed on employee competence in the Business Excellence Model, together with initiatives such as Investors in People, indicate that the relationship between employee development and business success is recognised at board level. At long last, the training department is becoming recognised as a value-adding function.

At the same time, the tools available to plan, manage, deliver and assess learning have evolved to a state where technology can significantly ease the trainer's lot.

Considering the basics

Most people understand the term 'learning curve' (see Figure 1). However, it is unusual to find too many people outside the human resources/training function who fully appreciate its finer detail.

Formal learning involves moving from a position of little or no knowledge/skill to one of possessing a basic level of competence. Typically, this phase is recognised as a 'course'.

The format is immaterial. The training may be undertaken in a classroom, by reading a book, via computer-based training (CBT) or by sitting with a colleague

An important point to note, though, is that people learn at different speeds. There are many reasons for this, including their educational background, work experience and preferred learning style. So a learning mechanism that offers learners an ability to study at the pace best suited to their needs may well deliver a more satisfactory outcome.

Training in volume increases the strain

Another major issue in most organisations, is the delivery of training at the exact time it's needed. Where large numbers of trainees are involved the management, administration and logistics associated with training can put even the most effective training department under strain.

CBT allows people to learn under less pressure, enabling them to build confidence and to reflect on their learning.

If learning is undertaken too soon, leaving a significant gap between study and the application of the new knowledge/skill, people enter the skills redundancy curve (see Figure 1). Unfortunately, this is an invisible process. By the time the knowledge/skill is put into practice, much of it may be forgotten or have become confused. Errors, confusion, delay and costs naturally ensue.

Alistair Morrison is Managing Director of Skillchange Systems Ltd, which specialises in developing multimedia training programmes that are tailored to clients' specific needs. Since April 1998, Skillchange Systems Ltd has held the British Association for Open Learning Quality Mark. It is a member of the Forum for Technology in Training and The Association for Computer Based Training (TACT). In addition, its employees are members of the Institute of IT Training.

So it is important that all managers recognise the critical period (see Figure 1), the optimum time when learning should be undertaken. While the length of the critical period varies for each person, in general the more technical the subject the shorter this critical period is.

Once people start to apply their new knowledge/skill, they continue up the learning curve, developing with experience and coaching, until, hopefully, they achieve expert status.

The trainer has never been in a better position to influence training strategies.

All of this is well known and fairly straightforward, so why is it so difficult to achieve?

The nature of traditional classroom instruction can make it inflexible when dealing with the demands of the modern economy. Consider a typical scenario where an organisation is implementing a new IT system to be used by several thousand people located at offices spread across the UK.

Limited trainer and physical resources might well mean that some people receive their training many weeks before 'go-live' date. Often, they receive training before some parts of the system are finalised. Whether the training is delivered centrally or locally, people will need to plan their time away from the office, and travel and accommodation issues will need to be addressed.

The classroom course will be made up by a group of trainees – possibly with differing levels of prerequisite knowledge and experience, such as IT literacy. They may have different knowledge/skill needs and learning styles.

Having been trained, these people go back to their places of work. Even if it could be identified that an individual had failed to grasp the subject fully or had slipped onto the skills redundancy curve, how likely is it that they would be sent on the course for a second time?

What do we do about those who miss their training slots? What do we do about 'new starters'?

The training programme supporting major change initiatives is often project-based: when implementation is complete so is the training. This can have a significant effect on the ongoing success of the new IT system.

Exploiting educational diversity

Today's trainers have a range of delivery options available to them, enabling them to design training strategies that accommodate the needs of the learning curve – and of learners themselves – more closely. The evolution of open and distance learning methods, and the deployment of technology itself, can significantly improve the effectiveness of major training programmes, such as those associated with IT systems' roll-outs.

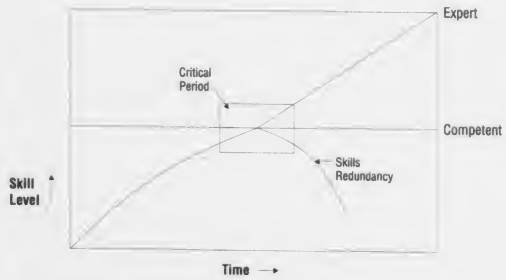

Figure 1. The learning curve

The use of technology-based training solutions can improve the effectiveness of training and simplify many of the management issues surrounding its implementation.

At long last, the training department is becoming recognised as a value-adding function.

Using a computer to learn about computing makes obvious sense. CBT is naturally self-paced, allowing all users to learn at their preferred speed. It can be configured to deliver a variable curriculum ensuring that each learner receives only the instruction relevant to them and their role.

On-line assessment methods enable the trainer to verify learning and to do something about it where appropriate.

CBT can be studied at the workplace, at the learner's desktop. It can, therefore, remove the need for the time-consuming and expensive travel programme that inevitably accompanies classroom-based training. Crucially, CBT can be studied 'just-in-time'.

Learning can now be guaranteed to take place at exactly the right time, no matter where the trainee is based. New starters can automatically receive the same high quality of instruction that their colleagues have received.

CBT remains available for refresher study and for reference. If people feel unsure about some aspect of their job, or if they move between roles, there is always a resource on hand to keep them at a minimum level of competence.

Learning can now be guaranteed to take place at exactly the right time, no matter where the trainee is based.

Line managers benefit from reduced time spent in training. People learn up to 50 per cent faster with CBT when compared to the equivalent classroom training. The modular nature of well-designed CBT means that the overall programme

of study may be scheduled around the workload, and the time previously spent travelling is saved.

CBT delivers quality and economy at the right time

CBT offers a wide range of benefits for the individual, the trainer and the organisation. It can contribute more effective training, faster and at a lower cost than using only conventional methods.

New starters can automatically receive the same high quality of instruction that their colleagues have received.

Benefits to the learner

- Studying only what is required improves motivation while reducing time off-the-job.
- The convenience of CBT enables study to take place where and when required without undue disruption to work or personal life.
- The interactive aspect of CBT can be used to make it challenging and fun: everyone participates in all aspects of their syllabus – for example, taking part in all the quizzes and examples, leading to more thorough training. The practical nature of CBT helps in quickly moving new knowledge and skills from short-term to long-term memory.
- By being self-paced; CBT allows people to learn under less pressure, enabling them to build confidence and to reflect on their learning.

Benefits to the trainer

- Large volume training can be undertaken with no reduction in delivery quality or consistency. No one need be left out.
- Centralised monitoring and record-keeping facilitates easier and less expensive training management.
- The trainer has increased time to invest in supporting learners and in delivering courses in subject areas where face-to-face and group instruction are more suitable.

Benefits to the organisation

- People are thoroughly prepared to apply their new knowledge and skills. On-line competence assessment measures their readiness.
- Everyone receives a consistent message leading to the more uniform on-the-job application.
- The permanent availability of CBT ensures timeliness of learning for all staff and the opportunity to keep their skills up to date.
- One of the major obstacles to effective training is significantly reduced: staff time away from the workplace.
- The deployment of CBT can hugely reduce the cost of training: the reduction in staff time required, the removal of travel and subsistence costs. Further reductions in the cost of training resources, such as rooms and materials, add to the cost savings.
- Automated assessment and performance monitoring allow effective management reporting with little administrative overhead.

Conclusion

A range of on-line training management and delivery systems is currently emerging onto the market. Tools such as Asymetrix Librarian; Macromedia's Pathware; PHOENIX from Pathlore Software; Solstra, and Lotus Learning Space are among those designed to help the trainer ensure that the right people receive the right training in the right place at the right time. They also include a wealth of features designed to support the learner, such as on-line tutoring and discussion groups, as well as curriculum planning and assessment for the trainer.

CBT is not the answer to everything. In many instances, it will form a valuable component of a mixed-media delivery strategy.

CBT is not the answer to everything. In many instances, it will form a valuable component of a mixed-media delivery strategy. For example, where a new IT system will be used in front of the customer, CBT can teach the use of the system in the context of the customer-facing process before trainees participate in a workshop designed to teach the interpersonal aspects of the situation. In this instance, the CBT teaches system use efficiently and economically, and ensures that everyone attending the workshop has the appropriate level of prerequisite knowledge; thus levering the effectiveness of the workshop.

With a clear understanding of the learning curve throughout the organisation and with access to current training technologies, trainers will find themselves in a strong position to deliver optimal strategies for education and training programmes that deliver enhanced value to the organisation. ■

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Computing tips for trainers

Steve McDowell and **Phil Race** show you how to win over your trainees to learning from machines and how to cope with technophobes at the same time as technophiles in your sessions. They offer some suggestions about what to do when technology fails you and, finally, they present some tips on making the most of presentation managers.

Steve McDowell

Phil Race

Steve McDowell is an associate lecturer for the Open University. He tutors courses on 'IT and Society' and 'Communications Technology' for the OU, and is co-author (with Phil Race) of two books on computers, training and education. Phil Race is an author and freelance consultant in topics such as open and flexible learning, the design of assessment, and study-skills development. He also runs chemical safety training workshops for the British Safety Council.

It does not seem long ago that the principal resources used by most trainers were overhead projectors, flipcharts, markerboards, and face-to-face interaction. We still use these media and processes in our own work as trainers, hopefully for things for which they remain good. We have found, however, that using computers and communication technologies has enriched our experience as trainers, and brought new dimensions and depth to the learning experiences of our trainees.

In this article, we would like to share with you some practical pointers, picked up by trial and error in our own work (mostly error!). We've selected and adapted just a few of the tips that we recently wrote for *500 Computing tips for Trainers* published by Kogan Page late in 1998.

Preparing trainees to be mouse-trained

Some trainees take to computers like ducks to water. Others, however, are likely to believe that they need a human being to train them, and that they can't learn from mere machines. The following suggestions may help you to win trainees over, so that they are more receptive to letting computers train them too.

- Tell your trainees that the computer may be better than you are! In other words, the expertise that will have gone into the computer-designed training packages is likely to be broader than that of any one person. The people who put together good quality training packages are normally very experienced in their field, and are likely to be expert trainers in their own right.
- Try to convince your trainees that learning from computers can be great fun. Once they are over any fear that they will break the equipment, or that the computer will 'think' that they are silly, most people actually take pleasure in getting a computer to work for them. Also, young people at school are increasingly highly mouse-trained, and many of your trainees may welcome the chance to keep up with their own kids!
- Get your trainees practising with mice. The best way for them to do this is simply to work through computer-based packages that require quite a lot of mouse-work, such as using drop-down menus, double-clicking icons and so on. Explain that it's a bit like learning to drive a car. While there are various kinds of mouse (including roller-balls, trackpads and various other ways of manipulating the position of the cursor on the screen), once competence has been gained using one system, different systems are relatively easy to learn. Suggest that they may benefit from varying the sensitivity of the mouse. When they get really competent with a mouse, they are likely to prefer using fast speeds, but using slow speeds can help them to gain confidence on the way.
- Remind your trainees of the comfort of making mistakes in privacy. When trainees get tasks or exercises wrong, in computer-based training only the computer knows – and computers don't mind! Therefore, it is much better to learn from one's mistakes using a computer than when human beings can see each and every slip.

- Computers don't mind the plea: 'run that by me again'. Some things are not learnt properly first time round. It's not always convenient (or possible) to ask a human trainer to go through something once more that a trainee might find difficult, but a computer will go through it as many times as it takes to get the message firmly home.

Coping with technophobes and technophiles

In many groups of trainees, there will be a few who are convinced that they cannot work with technology. This fear may be very deep-seated and you will have to work very hard to help them overcome it. People who love computers can also become a problem, especially when they know more about IT than you do! It is common for a group to contain some individuals who have considerable IT skills. The following suggestions may help you to cope with computer haters and computer lovers at the same time.

- Carry out some assessment of prior knowledge at an early stage. In order to identify those who have good, or bad, computing skills, you will need to ask questions. You could do this informally, with a few spoken questions. You could also have a form that trainees fill in before the course in order to clarify this.
- Test that trainees really have the skills that they claim. People sometimes have an unrealistic view of their skills so you need to check that they can really do all they claim. Set these people some tasks that will allow them to demonstrate these skills. Avoid any suggestion that you are testing them: say that you are assessing their prior learning in order to help you plan their future work.
- Remind technophobes of the difficulties people face in learning new skills. People are always taking on new challenges that seem impossible at first. If they are persistent enough, they can surprise themselves. Remind your trainees that they have already learnt far more complex topics, such as learning to walk, talking, riding a bike or driving a car. These tasks seemed impossibly difficult at first, but with practice they can become automatic functions.
- Make sure that trainees realise that computers do exactly as they are told. It is common for people to say that 'the computer' did something. This sort of thought can encourage them to believe that the machine is outside their control and acts by itself. It is very important that they should realise that the computer does exactly as it is told. If something unexpected happens, it is as a result of something the computer has been instructed to do, and there is an explanation for it.
- See if technophiles can help others who have less knowledge. If some trainees have well-developed skills, they could use them to help those who may be struggling. This can be very helpful to all concerned: your life can be easier, the beginners can receive more help and the advanced trainees can crystallise their knowledge by explaining it to someone else.

Have with you some back-up activities as well as back-up resources.

Coping with the unexpected

Technology is wonderful, when it is all there, all working, and all familiar. However, there are times when we all have to go back to blackboards or whiteboards, and overhead projectors. The following suggestions may help you to keep your show on the road when the road seems blocked!

- Never depend on being able to do a computer-managed presentation. Most of the time, there will be no problem, but on that occasion where it just isn't going to work, be ready to go ahead using an overhead projector, or even a whiteboard or flipchart if no visual aids are available. Always carry the main part of your presentation on a few carefully chosen overheads, just in case.
- If the power fails, check quickly that it's not an emergency! Power may go off because there's a fire in the building or because an accident has happened somewhere. Without panicking your trainees, or rushing them out of the room, find out whether you need to leave the venue and, if so, forget everything else and concentrate on getting everyone out safely and quickly.
- Don't panic when the power goes off! It may well mean that you will need to restructure your training session, but it doesn't mean that you will have to abandon it (unless, of course, there is no lighting at all left in the room). Getting flustered and cross does not help to make your training session a success. Stay cool.
- Take a break. If you know that it's going to take you a few minutes to devise a back-up plan for the session, give yourself some time and space to get on with this. Your trainees won't be devastated by the prospect of a few minutes off while you organise some alternatives.
- Keep your back-up resources ready for immediate use. It could be that you've not used your emergency overheads for months, but it's still worth having them in a sensible order, so that you can locate any one of them at short notice.
- Have with you some back-up activities as well as back-up resources. When there are parts of your planned programme that you just can't do, it is important to be able to fill your trainees' time usefully. Think of some group tasks or exercises that will help them get a firm grip on the basics, which can replace some of the time when you might otherwise have shown them some of the finer points about the topic of the session.
- Don't spend too long trying to get things working. Even if you are fairly certain that it will only take another five minutes to get all of the equipment working, five minutes can be a long time for your trainees to watch you trying to sort things out, and there is every chance that it will then take much longer anyway. It is better to get started with your session on time, and to fiddle about with the equipment again (if at all) when your trainees are busy in a task, particularly a group task where they will be much less likely to take any notice of your activities with the equipment.
- When all is back to normal, don't just re-start exactly where you left off. It can be worthwhile to re-start at the position a few minutes *before* the power went off, so that your trainees can pick up the threads of what they were thinking when it happened.

Some 'don'ts' for presentation managers!

Now we turn to you! Do you use presentation managers in your work? Computer-generated presentation managers are increasingly being used, instead of overhead projection and other simpler means of supporting presentations. For many trainers, the most familiar presentation manager is Microsoft PowerPoint. Any presentation medium can be used well or badly. We think the following list shows the main things to strive to avoid!

- Don't cause 'death by bullet point'! Even though computer-aided presentation packages can introduce bullet points to slides in a variety of ways (fly from left, dissolve and so on), bullet points can quickly become tiresome to an audience. It is worth having a good reason for building any slide step by step.
- Don't forget that it's not that bright! Most computer-aided presentation packages rely on projection equipment that is not nearly as bright as a good overhead projector. This means that you may need to take particular care with room lighting, daylight from windows and (worst of all) direct sunlight. Don't forget that sunlight moves. If you're setting up a training room first thing in the morning, you may need to plan ahead for where any sunlight may be later in the day.
- Don't just use it like an overhead projector substitute! Simply transferring the contents of your overhead transparencies into a computer-delivered presentation does not make full use of the medium. You are unlikely to get as much information into a single computer-projected slide as you might have done on an acetate sheet.
- Don't overdo the special effects. You can program your whole presentation to build slide text either in a single way (for example, fly from left) or randomly. Doing the whole presentation in a single format becomes boring for your audience, but programming a random sequence of slide builds tends to be irritating for you as presenter, as you don't know what build sequence will be produced when you move to your next slide. Similarly, don't go overboard on the snazzy changes from one slide to the next.
- Don't forget to check the focus before you start. Looking for any length of time at fuzzy images can give some members of your audience headaches, as their eyes try in vain to compensate for the fuzziness. Modern systems have easy ways of adjusting the focus, but older systems may need to be set up in considerable detail before an acceptable image quality is produced, or may just not be capable of producing clear still images. If you can't get the image sharp, don't go ahead with your projection, but revert to other means such as overhead transparencies.
- Don't use the wrong colours. Colours that look good on a computer screen don't always show up so well when they are projected. If most of your presentations will be in rooms with natural daylight, it is usually best to stick to dark colours for text, and light (or even white) backgrounds. If you know you're going to be working in a training venue where you have full control of the lighting, you can then be more adventurous and use light lettering against dark backgrounds.
- Don't go backwards for too long! If you need to return to a slide you showed much earlier, it is better to switch off the display, and find the slide you want without your audience seeing every step. The same applies to returning to your original place in your presentation.
- Don't underestimate the potential of remote controls surprising you! Many systems allow you to change slides with a remote control connected to your computer, or to the projection equipment. Pressing the wrong button on this can switch the system to something quite different (for example, video input), and may mean that you can find yourself unable to get back to your presentation without losing your cool.
- Don't forget the conditions appropriate for human sleep! Turning down the lights, sitting comfortably in the same place for more than a few minutes, and listening to the sound of your voice may be just the right conditions for your audience to drop off.

We hope that from this article you'll have found at least one useful suggestion. If you found lots, we can be persuaded to write a further article! ■

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Support the ones who support your managers

Claire Wilson talks about the importance of developing secretarial support staff who are too often overlooked when training schedules are drawn up.

Is your training plan complete? Have you met the needs of both your organisation's strategy and the development needs of all your employees? I'm sure the answer to these questions is 'Yes'. But, if you haven't planned to meet the development needs of your secretarial support staff, I would ask you to think again.

When I make this suggestion to those that I meet during my work I am often met with the response that secretaries no longer exist, so there is no need for development training. This is partly my point – the role of the traditional secretary has changed and continues to evolve. However, the people employed in those roles do not disappear. They continue, but with broader roles; and they need some support to make this transition.

So, what does this transition involve? There are the obvious changes that information technology has brought, which has meant more efficient text processing, thus reducing the need for typists. However, the role has changed in other ways.

As organisation structures flatten and the number of managers is reduced, secretaries are taking on more junior management responsibilities. These responsibilities include resolving problems, attending meetings, managing projects, researching and writing reports, and writing policies and procedures. In some organisations a personal assistant or senior secretary may take on supervisory responsibilities, which may include carrying out appraisals and setting objectives.

The luxury of having one personal assistant for each senior manager, or executive, has also declined. Therefore, senior secretaries now find themselves working as members of teams or supporting a group of managers, all of whom have differing priorities. This elicits the need for decision-making and prioritisation skills, as well as the need to understand teamworking. In addition, as managers' workloads increase, they are beginning to realise that their secretaries are in a position to relieve them of some of their tasks, such as attending meetings on their behalf or writing press releases.

The secretarial profession continues to be female dominated and, therefore, comprises professionals who chose to return to their careers after taking a break, for example, to have a family. Given that the role has changed, this group may have particular needs for refresher training or confidence boosting.

the role of the traditional secretary has changed and continues to evolve.

Apart from the organisational changes that are affecting secretaries, members of this profession also have the desire to change themselves. If you were to ask a group of secretaries whether they would like more responsibility, the answer is usually 'Yes'. This desire for increased responsibility is often accompanied by a desire for greater respect and a higher profile within the organisation. Indeed, the low worth that others attach to the secretarial role can become reflected in the feeling of self-worth that secretaries themselves hold. As training professionals we know that sometimes an individual's personal development can be held back by a lack of confidence.

Claire Wilson is an experienced trainer who specialises in management skills training for secretaries and PAs. She also trains managers who wish to work more effectively with their support staff. She holds a BA in Secretarial Administration.
Claire can be contacted by e-mail at claire.wilson.broadbridge@dial.pipex.com

Addressing the above development needs brings benefits to both the organisation and the individual. Giving secretaries the opportunity, and the skills, to equip them for a variety of new responsibilities is a means of identifying the skills that this sector of your workforce possesses. It may also be a way of identifying weaker areas. In turn, these skills may be used to form part of your succession planning. For example, you may discover that a secretary has many of the skills and qualities required to become a trainer!

Secretaries face a dilemma, whether their role grows or not. If the role broadens beyond the comfort zone of the postholder, and no support or skill development is offered to help with this growth, the postholder may leave the organisation rather than complete the transition. Paradoxically, if the role remains static, an ambitious secretary will seek a new challenge, in a new role, with a different organisation. In either case, development training can help to retain staff – which, as we know, saves time and money.

Finally, secretaries provide an interface between managers and customers – both internal and external. It is, therefore, important that they project a professional image. This may seem obvious; however, the obvious is sometimes overlooked! This includes thinking about image and visibility within the organisation.

How can we develop our secretaries? Do not underestimate the value of networking with other secretaries. Internal networking can be facilitated through regular meetings of the secretarial team. These meetings in themselves are a learning tool, as members can take turns to chair the meeting and take notes. They can also be used as an opportunity to invite appropriate guest speakers. Attending external networking events is also important for sharing ideas and learning from fellow professionals. Any opportunity to delegate or broaden the tasks that secretaries undertake should be used as a development opportunity. Secretaries should be encouraged to reflect on their approach and identify what they have actually learnt from it. This development can be enhanced through maintaining a Learning Log, and used during meetings with a mentor.

In addition to on-the-job development, there is a role for formal development workshops. Secretaries should be brought together in a formal setting in order to introduce new concepts and provide an opportunity to practise these in a safe environment.

When I talk about training courses for secretaries, I do not mean technical skills such as shorthand or office procedures. The development areas that are covered on courses are very similar to those on a supervisory management course, but from the secretary's perspective. Influencing skills and the ability to present a credible image are areas that are obviously important for the work of secretaries. Other areas include analytical skills, problem-solving, decision-making, career development, managing change and goal-setting. In other words – management skills for support staff.

Perhaps you are already developing the potential of your secretarial support team to the full. If so, I hope I have given you some new ideas for development areas or for persuading your managers to support you.

If this is an area you have yet to address, I would urge you to build on the varied skills base that secretaries possess and harness their long-term potential. ■

UK-HRD snippets

UK-HRD is an e-mail based discussion forum run by *Training Journal*, here we present extracts from messages posted to the forum.

To subscribe, send an e-mail to majordomo@ukhrd.com with the message 'subscribe network' (no quotes) in the text.

A debate on the case for a separate training institute independent of IPD and a parallel discussion on professional qualifications for trainers have been running in the forum for some time. Jean Shaw was finally drawn into the debate and put forward a passionate argument for maintaining the status quo.

I follow the postings daily and am usually too busy to respond to issues raised. However the plethora of recent comments about IPD as an Institute and its qualifications has finally roused me to respond.

As a professionally qualified trainer who used to belong to the old ITD and has since transferred to IPD (incidentally also paying all my own membership fees) I would like to comment on all the recent mailings about a) a separate institute for trainers and b) the IPD qualification structure. I am personally getting a little tired of all the griping and moaning going on. I do not feel this is an intelligent debate!

Firstly, trainers, unless you are a stand-up and deliver jobbing trainers (the equivalent of a copy typist in a typing pool) you need to know about all the HR issues, which affect management HR strategies. They are all inter-linked and as a consultant I need to understand the issues facing any client organisation, even when giving a training consultancy service. Training and Development is a major part, but only a part, of HR. The old ITD, whilst a very friendly Institute, and indeed covering lots of training issues, did not give the quodos to people that the IPD does – IPD has developed an excellent reputation and its members are well respected.

Second, regarding the qualification structure – yes I agree it is hard to proceed further than Licentiate without learning about other HR issues. But I would like to go on record to thank IPD for the support they have given me in studying my MSc HRD insisting that my university be flexible and give exemptions from various training modules because of prior experience and qualifications (NVQ Level 4 incidentally – one of the 2,183). I have nearly completed my second year now and IPD has advised that I can upgrade from Licentiate to Fellow immediately after this year based on my additional qualifications and my prior experience. Incidentally, I have paid all my university fees myself. Why not? It is for my benefit – and no I am not rich.

Jean's comments provoked an immediate response. George Edwards wrote:

'Firstly, trainers, unless you are stand up and deliver jobbing trainers (the equivalent of copy typists in a typing pool).'

A survey in the early 90s conducted by Webton Court (then EITB) revealed that 70% of the training in British industry was performed by the single skill trainer in the workplace, HSOs, and similar – in other words the people we often represent as members, who would view these remarks as offensive.

The gist of this correspondent's mail seems to be that IPD is fine if you have a masters and call yourself a consultant, but if you train in welding at BNFL or safety on an oil rig you are below the salt, and IPD is not for you.

Not a corporate IPD message I feel, and pretty unacceptable to lots of sound workplace trainers I have trained (to ITD standards as well) over the years. But as I say, IPD is not the only professional institute representing trainers, and especially it seems (what was that expression again) – 'the equivalent of a copy typist in a typing pool'.

Mind you, I haven't seen many typing pools lately ...

Training's focus within IPD is a debate that will rumble along for some while yet but in any discussion forum it's possible for a new discussion thread to immediately take centre stage. Phil Churchill's contribution is one such example.

WHAT IS THE REALITY?

Despite all the rhetoric and all the posturing, have things really changed much over the years? As I drag my weary body around the country, bringing the consultancy and training profession (sic) into yet more disrepute, I believe the reality at work is far different from the rosy view of many theorists and grossly over-priced and over-rated conference guest speakers.

So here's how I see things. Do you agree and how do you and your organisation stack up?

Most people are working flat out. Despite the so-called benefits of new technology, far too many are stretched to the limit, with no time to stop and think let alone plan ahead. Change programmes just mean more work and more stress.

Few people actually feel valued – instead, they feel threatened and put upon. Empowerment? For many, that's just a joke. Empowerment to them means being blamed when things go wrong. So, very few actually suggest changes – best to play safe.

Regardless, many managers don't encourage ideas and suggestions. They prefer to be in charge and to be seen as the experts. Innovation and creativity from their team (?) are threats to their managerial status. So they still rely on the old 'command and control' style, as otherwise it 'would result in anarchy'.

Vast numbers of employees have responsibility but not authority. They still have to check decisions with their managers, that's if they are allowed to make or participate in decision-making in the first place. Despite excellent initiatives like Investors in People, most people don't trust management to treat them well or fairly. They believe managers have their favourites, they ignore their problems and needs, and pay little heed to their growth and development.

Again, despite all the talk about quality, service and customer care, most employees put pleasing their manager above 'delighting' (where do we get these expressions from?) the customer. The strong feeling of insecurity promotes an understandable need for self-preservation, so 'best to keep in the manager's good books'.

That's got that off my chest. Well?

Hilary Goldsmith, while in broad agreement with Phil, posted an interesting counter-view.

How refreshing! Bleak, yes, but refreshing. It's vital that we retain a critical view of the health of the organisations we work in and with. I agree with you, but I also profoundly believe that it doesn't have to be that way. At the risk of sounding like one of your over-rated (sadly not over-priced) conference speakers, I believe organisations can be transformed to the great benefit of their employees, their customers and their long-term futures.

The truth that you highlight is that the great majority of organisations claiming to have changed have not really done so. But for all the organisations shivering nervously in the shallow end with their arms wrapped round their chests, there are a few ploughing confidently up and down the pool.

So where do you go from here?

First, know where you're going. Look at your organisation's strategy. If you have one. No, I mean a real one, not a mission statement that could be transplanted seamlessly to any other organisation. You need a real sense of direction and real goals.

Next, look at your current state of health. For a holistic, thorough, non-prescriptive approach, use the Business Excellence Model.

Having identified things that need to change, go out and look at who's doing it differently. Really look. Don't believe their PR. Read between the lines. Ask what the problems are. If it doesn't look quite so rosy under the surface, don't just throw it away, but think about how you'd do it differently.

Bring back the ideas from outside and adapt them to your own needs and culture. Consider what else needs to change for them to work. Then implement it, and don't stop til you've finished.

And all the way along, the people doing the jobs should do this. They're the ones who know.

We'll leave the final word for this month to Marcus Leaning. He responded to Phil's reality check by pointing the finger at our education system.

Does the whole sorry problem stem from our education system, where the important thing is to guess what is in the teacher's head, and where keeping knowledge and ideas to yourself give you extra marks (in your test, project work etc)?

Not only does the problem stem from the education system, it is also pretty endemic within the system. Universities, which have all the structures in place for the delegation of tasks or at least the incorporation of staff into the decision-making process, still often work off a power-based model. The centralising of power and the refusal to allow decisions to be made lower down the food chain, not to mention the feeding of subordinates with only titbits of info relating to projects in which they are engage, destroys motivation. This in turn, of course, makes training and development all the more difficult. If anyone has any clue as how to get senior staff/management to trust and let staff get on with devolved tasks without an iron claw I'd be most grateful to hear ...

On another point about focusing on the acquisition of IIP and TQM awards for the letter heads, I understood the system to be that in order to obtain these awards the organisation had to demonstrate that they adhered to the policies and to do this they must actually 'be' doing them. It's a bit like writing a test. You don't write your course then write your test; instead you work out what you want them to know, write a test to measure this then build a course around getting them to pass the test. If the evaluation was done properly then they will obtain the skills knowledge by learning the things they need to pass the test.

Please address comments and views to the publisher, Training Journal. *For further information on the UK-HRD discussion forum, point your browser at http://www.ukhrd.com*

NETcheck

a personal view of the Internet by Clare Forrest

Clare continues to trawl the Net in her search for further useful and interesting sites. If you have any comments to make, or know of sites you would like Clare to recommend, send an e-mail to her at ClareForrest@compuserve.com

I've concentrated this month on sites that get you where you need to go – that is, they contain search engines that are specifically related to business and training and development. Overall I haven't been disappointed and, even better, there are beginning to be a few primarily UK orientated sites.

The first is a business information site called BIRD-ONLINE, which can be found at www.birdonline.co.uk/frames.html

BIRD stands for Business Information Resource Directory and the site is owned and managed by Business Administration Services (Wales) Ltd – a company specialising in Business and Management Information Services. Surprisingly though, the company is almost diffident in promoting itself and concentrates very hard on providing a genuinely useful site.

It needs to be said that this is clearly a very 'young' site and that some of its resources are a little sparse but, as more and more people find this site, I am sure this will change. BIRD has the potential to become a very valuable resource, and has the virtue of being clean and clear to navigate around. It is aimed at UK business people trying to find useful and relevant business information. BIRD seeks out good quality sites offering free information, which it reviews, categorises and places in its virtual library.

At the moment it has concentrated on general business information, including training resources but it is also developing an industry specific search facility.

In addition there is a recently launched networking service, which aims to provide listings and access to business opportunities regionally, nationally or internationally, and also to UK networking events. This is one of the two parts of the site that, in my view, needs the most development. The search facility itself is fine but I couldn't find any events on for the month searched in. On the plus side there is a fair amount of support material to help businesses deal with the particular challenges of on-line business relationships.

The second problem area is the bookshop, simply because – when I visited – there was no way to search it other than by looking at every one of the books there. A title search is an obvious next step. Incidentally, this part of the site is a spin-off from the excellent Amazon.com whose ordering and delivery service is excellent.

The only other niggle is that the very simple and pleasantly designed pages took a fair time to load. However, this might be a server problem rather than a page design problem.

I like this site. It has enormous potential, is already useful and deserves support.

www.trainingdecisions.com is a much more 'rounded' site than BIRD in that it is clear that a lot of time and effort has been invested in building it. The design, in terms of its look, is excellent – soothing on the eye, not so fancy that you get distracted, and easy to find your way around. My slight gripe is that sometimes there are unnecessary pages before you get where you really want to go.

Training Decisions, which has built this website, has named it Schola (sic). It is for HR and Training professionals to use to access information on courses, products and training books. Its search engine uses 'natural' language – for example, 'Tell me about the Internet' – and I found this worked very well. Another good starting point for a search! I tried for 'recruitment' and obtained several links that I hadn't found using Yahoo.

There is the usual HR forum for queries. It seems to me that, in general, these web-based ones are not particularly well supported. The topics here were sparse and the responses even fewer. This is not uncommon – I suspect that most sites with bulletin boards and forums find this a problem simply because most users probably only visit a site for a specific reason. Other features include very useful links to search engines specific to finding conference venues.

Schola is free to use for both users and suppliers although it does require you to register. Apparently Schola was exhibited at the IPD HRD Conference during April 1999 and was awarded the 'hottest new product of the show'. You can make up your own mind. I liked it.

It has been remiss of me not to mention The TrainingZone website until now.

www.trainingzone.co.uk is one of the very best sites for training professionals. Tim Pickles, who manages the site on behalf of Pavilion Publishing and Conferences, deserves several accolades for the time and effort he has clearly invested in making this a truly beneficial and effective site for trainers. I'm sure that many of you will already subscribe to the TrainingZone's (free) e-mail newsletter, which briefly reviews new training sites (competition for this column!) but may not have visited the actual site for a while. It is another excellent starting point of research, particularly as it includes what Tim calls Microsites – opportunities for organisations who want to 'relieve themselves of the time and trouble in creating and managing their own website' to access the WWW audience.

One of the site's most invaluable services is its directory of every UK registered company, which enables you to easily find out details of actual and potential clients and 'check out their directors and find out about their business and turnover *before* pitching for business.'

Apart from company and recent press research there is also the Toolkit area, which offers users an interesting range of learning materials, handouts, programmes, discussion papers and other resources to download. Users are also encouraged to contribute to this part of the site.

The last of the 'get you where you want to go sites' I looked at this month is www.hr-guide.com Although US based, this is a one-page starting point for HR links that does exactly what it says it does – contain links to other Internet-based resources for HR professionals and students. Excellent.

WHAT'S NEW

Here's a quick round-up of recently released training resources. In addition to details of video- and text-based training packs, we also covers audio, CBT, CD-ROM, intranet and Internet programmes, along with open courses.

IT Skills

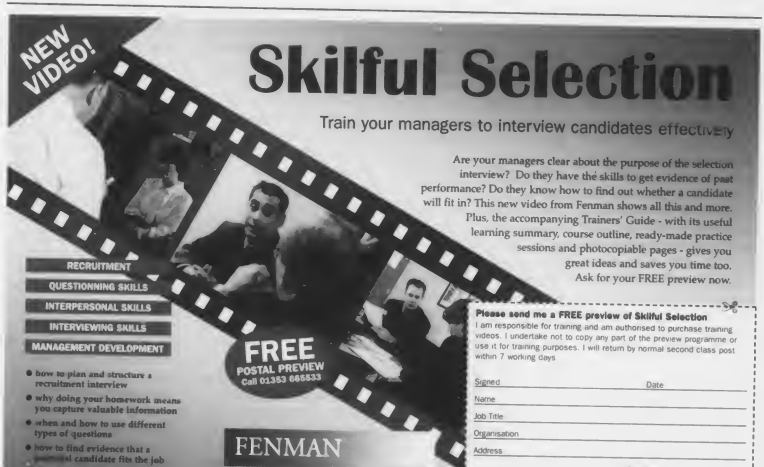
New Horizons Computer Learning Centres has announced the launch of a new tool to assess the IT skill competencies of Microsoft Office application users. The new *Masterware Assessment* solution offers comprehensive software knowledge assessments for all the Microsoft Office 95 and 97 applications, which include popular solutions such as Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Windows. *Masterware Assessment* provides for three levels of assessment: beginner, intermediate and advanced. Tests are easily assigned to specific individuals whose test scores are then easily tracked. All test data are saved in a Microsoft Access database for reporting and reference. The tool even makes suggestions of training requirements according to results. For further information contact Zarir Vakil on 0171 684 2000.

Rebirth of learning through people and organisations

Renaissance Management is not a book about history: it is a book about today and the future. Taking the history and culture of the Renaissance as a metaphor and frame for reference for modern organisations, it examines today's multi-skilled flexible worker. The author, Steve Carter, challenges some of the traditional assumptions concerning the nature of organisations and the relationships they must have with their workforce. In particular, he criticises the notion of fixed roles, favouring a more flexible and holistic approach to working practice and organisational structure. *Renaissance Management* brings a unique approach to management thinking and corporate structure, and embraces the latest management thinking on flexible workforces – Reversal Theory – and emphasises that a high performing workforce must be an inconsistent one. An inspiring and thought-provoking book, *Renaissance Management* will stimulate debate about the real priorities and opportunities for individuals and organisations, making it essential reading for all managers, trainers and HR professionals. For further information telephone 01935 828800.

'Inspirational' venue for millennium planning

A secluded world-class retreat, popular with celebrities and Hollywood stars, is fast becoming the UK's number one corporate hideaway for boardroom strategists and creative 'think tanks' preparing for the new millennium. *The Samling*, a remote country house at Dovenest in the heart of the Lake District, is owned by Roger McKechnie – the man behind the Phileas Fogg range of snack foods and one of Britain's best known entrepreneurs. Unlike traditional business venues such as hotels and conference centres, at *The Samling*, project teams take over the entire premises.


NEW VIDEO!
Skilful Selection
Train your managers to interview candidates effectively
Are your managers clear about the purpose of the selection interview? Do they have the skills to get evidence of past performance? Do they know how to find out whether a candidate will fit in? This new video from Fenman shows all this and more. Plus, the accompanying Trainers' Guide - with its useful learning summary, course outline, ready-made practice sessions and photocopiable pages - gives you great ideas and saves you time too. Ask for your FREE preview now.
RECRUITMENT
QUESTIONNING SKILLS
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS
INTERVIEWING SKILLS
MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT
how to plan and structure a recruitment interview
why doing your homework means you capture valuable information
when and how to use different types of questions
how to find evidence that a potential candidate fits the job
the best predictor of future performance is past performance
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Organisation
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POST TO: FENMAN, FREEPOST CB12, Ely, Cambs CB7 4BR (no stamp needed)
TJ/6/99

The retreat comprises just ten double bedrooms (partners are encouraged to accompany guests), ensuring that creativity levels are maximised, while disruption and outside influences are kept to a minimum. To reinforce *The Samling*'s position as the 'ultimate think-tank' and a serious venue for business, Roger has also introduced a new package of corporate opportunities, including arts sponsorship programmes and prestigious networking events. A series of exclusive seminars with top business gurus are also planned for later in the year. For further information telephone 015394 31922.

First interactive tool revolutionises quality assessment

For the first time, organisations working towards the European standard for quality have a state-of-the-art interactive tool for instant feedback and results analysis. *The IML Workbench©* combines specially developed software with cordless keypads so that any number of participants at workshops, brainstorm sessions or high-level meetings can respond on the spot. The package also allows for input via individual PCs, touch-screen kiosks, Internet, intranet, interactive web page or e-mail – creating a company-wide quality assessment system. Formed in 1991, IML has pioneered both hardware and software for interactive communications. These systems, which allow for instant response and feedback from an unlimited number of participants on site or via the Internet, have applications for corporate communications, training and development, product and service launches, promotional projects, research and voting. For further information contact Sylvia Ewing on 01428 727476.

Roffey Park launches website

Roffey Park, the management development and research institute, has launched a website: www.roffey-park.co.uk Visitors to the site can 'tour' the Roffey environment by clicking on areas such as training suites; learning resource centre; video conferencing suite; health and fitness centre; *en-suite* bedrooms; reception; restaurant; lounges; grounds and recreation facilities. The site also includes a location map, newsletter articles and case studies of in-company programmes. Based in Horsham, West Sussex, Roffey Park provides open programmes, qualification programmes (MBA, MSc in Management Development and Post Graduate Diplomas in Management), workshops, tailored in-company development initiatives and consultancy services – all aimed at organisations and individuals in both the UK and international markets. It also undertakes research into current and future issues which affect the way people work. For further information telephone 01293 851565.

Microsoft Skills 2000

Bill Gates has announced a new UK initiative to encourage people outside of IT to change their views and consider working in IT. The *Microsoft Skills 2000* initiative kicks off with the release of a new website, designed to provide a launch pad for anyone open to considering a career in IT and highlighting the unlimited potential for everyone. The website, found at www.microsoft.com/uk/shift will provide the following.

- Real-life examples of success stories from male and female trainees as young as 20, who after taking courses, have moved into highly rewarding IT positions less than a year after taking their qualifications.
- A first point of call for anyone considering a move to IT, encouraging people to change their views of IT, shift into IT, and bring their non-IT skills with them from all walks of life. An aptitude assessment will help people decide if IT is for them.
- A gateway to a wealth of information and ideas, with links to organisations, agencies, industry bodies and useful resources that can answer any immediate concerns and provide further details on how to proceed, making it easier to get skilled and move into IT jobs.

The *Microsoft Skills 2000* initiative aims to increase the pool of IT practitioners in the UK, through positively promoting the benefits of a career in IT, encouraging more people to choose a career in IT, and assisting people's move into IT. It includes a number of innovative programmes with partners to raise awareness of the opportunities of work in IT, and to make it easier for people to shift training, and obtain work experience and their first IT job. For further information telephone 0870 6020100.

Budgeting

Intellexis International, the media-based training development and marketing specialists, have added '*Introduction to Budgeting*' to their highly successful Finance Series of computer-based training programs. Containing some four to five hours of interactive instructional material, *Introduction to Budgeting* is intended for managers who have direct or a contributing responsibility for managing budgets. This target audience includes recent graduates, staff recently promoted to a management role, managers with 'profit and loss' responsibility, cost centre managers, marketing and sales staff, production managers, and managers controlling capital and operating expenditure levels. *Introduction to Budgeting* contains a self-assessment facility designed to help users master the learning objectives of the course. It also directs the user to the specific topic areas that need further work. No prior knowledge of budgeting is required for this course. Currently available on CD for stand-alone or network deliver, *Introduction to Budgeting* will be available for on-line delivery later this year. For further information telephone 0171 371 4444.

Polyspan announces new ViewStation SP

Polyspan, the global leader in group conferencing, has announced its new *ViewStation SP* group videoconferencing system. Designed and delivered by Polyspan as a high-performance, easy-to-use videoconferencing system for small meeting rooms and offices, *ViewStation SP* supports high-quality video up to 15 frames per second at 128kbps. It implements H.263+ video, the newest industry standard for enhanced video quality, and supports Advanced Predition Mode with optimised motion handling at low bandwidth rates to provide exceptionally clear videos. Polyspan's innovative codec architecture gives *ViewStation SP* the shortest video delay time in the industry. For exceptional sound clarity, *ViewStation SP* incorporates Polyspan's market-leading full-duplex audio technology, as well as Polyspan's AcousticPkus 716 audio algorithm, for crystal clear audio quality. For further information telephone 01865 335500.

New LearnKey video training course for Cisco CCNA

LearnKey has announced the release of a new self-paced training course for Cisco Certified Network Associate. This new video series, which prepares you for your CCNA certification, is available through UK distributor October Systems.

This new four-tape training series is lead by Gary Crothers. Gary is a Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert (CCIE), Certified Network Associate (CCNA), Cisco Certified Solutions Instructor, and Cisco Certified Sales Instructor. LearnKey's CCNA four-tape training course is priced at £219, excluding delivery and VAT. For further information contact October Systems on 01440 730315.

Unique store launched on worldwide web

Recently launched on the Internet is a new system of immediate and editable information for working life. Branded *'the-shelf'* this unique website provides instant access documents, seminars and trainer guides to improve skills. As well as the regular special offers, *the-shelf* also offers a whole range of complimentary documents as part of its commitment to building an online community. Different from any other service currently available, *the-shelf* gives the user the convenience of total editability. In addition, there are no limitations on how or how often the documents are used within the customer's own organisation. No more expensive manuals, which may not exactly fit the requirements. Using *the-shelf* is simple. All you need is web access. After logging on, the user can browse through a range of documents that provide either quick fix solutions such as 'carrying out an appraisal', to the more complex procedures of setting up an assessment centre. The on-line purchase process is simple and secure. Material can be downloaded immediately to the user's computer at home, work or place of study. The site is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, so information is available outside normal working hours. *the-shelf* understands the need for extra support when office resources just aren't available. With prices ranging from less than £20 for instant meeting guides up to £1,000 for leadership, assessment and development programmes, *the-shelf* prides itself on a 'something for everyone' attitude. So, whether you are a team leader or a job seeker, *the-shelf* aims to be your first port of call for immediate solutions. For further information telephone 0171 431 5366.

First Building One Stop Shop opens in Wembley

London's first *Building One Stop Shop* (BOSS) offering advice on training and employment opportunities in the construction industry has been launched by the North West London Construction and Environmental Forum. The Forum, a partnership between North West London TEC, the Construction Industry Training Board, the College of North West London and the London Boroughs of Brent and Harrow, set up BOSS in response to the acute shortages of skilled operatives in the construction industry. Commenting at the launch, William Hetherington Construction Initiatives Manager at North West London TEC said, 'This is truly a one-stop shop facility offering not only advice and information but also a tangible outcome – jobs for those wishing to enter the industry and well skilled operatives for construction companies wishing to expand.' For further information telephone 0181 901 5000.

Virtual Learning Network

Arthur Andersen has launched *Arthur Andersen Virtual Learning Network* (VLN), a web-based learning solution for business and industry. It incorporates US and European multimedia courses, a choice of delivery options, and learning management and tracking features. Further information is available on the VLN website at http://www.aavln.com

FREE IT training

In response to extraordinary demand and the seriousness of the millennium bug problem, CG Resources has been authorised to extend its programme of *FREE millennium training*. The aim is to help you manage the Year 2000 IT problem successfully, and improve your IT skills in general. You do not need to be a technical expert to attend. CG Resources is also offering FREE courses in PC Operating Environments, Programming and Access databases. These will help you meet your deadlines as well as develop your technical knowledge. For further information telephone 0161 792 8234.

Accounting for excellence

The National Extension College (NEC) has fully updated it *AATplus Intermediate* and *Technician Accounting* materials to meet the revised standards of competence in accounting for N/SVQ levels 3 and 4. The new materials, renamed *Accounting for Excellence* have been revised using AAT guidelines, but are suitable for a range of equivalent accounting qualifications offered by AAT, ACCA, LCCI and Edexcel. The material is designed to guide the learner through each topic step-by-step, gradually building towards assessment. It provides all the support and information required for a challenging subject, clarifying along the way what to many is a rigorous assessment process. For further information telephone 01223 450200.

Successful Events Toolkit

Whatever your experience in organising events, here's a resource that will significantly lighten your lead and brighten the prospects of a successful event. Author and trainer Tony Bray, presents an impressive and highly approachable set of methodologies and practical techniques which anyone involved in organising events should know about.

Successful Events is a world away from the superficial guides to event management you often see from hotels. Because it is written specifically for trainers and managers, it doesn't dwell too much on the logistics of tea and coffee and room layout, but gets right to the heart of the matter – on how to get the maximum attention, commitment, enthusiasm, excitement and ensure the best results. There's detailed advice (yes, including tea and coffee), excellent procedures, checklists and frameworks for all aspects of planning and execution that everyone can profit from – consultants, trainers and project leaders, including over 100 pages of 'OK to copy' tools to assist you in Planning and holding a Successful Event. For further information telephone 01353 665533.

Brian Tucker reviews

Brian Tucker is Company Secretary and Co-ordinator for The Forum for Technology in Training, and a technology-based training consultant. He may be contacted on 0151 342 8606.

QUICK GUIDES
Series of four courses
CD-ROMs

This series of four courses, which comes as individual CDs, are structured in the same way as their house style.

The courses allow a number of options:

- to take the full course in a linear fashion, being taken from chapter to chapter without going to the Main Menu
- to work from the Main Menu, deciding on the order you want for viewing the modules.

Within either of these modes you can select to:

- take a test at the end of each chapter/module
- take the full module, skim or revise.

Whichever option you take you will be asked some review questions at the end of each topic. There is a good summary at the end of each module and also checklists that you can save to print off later. Saving to floppy disk is a good idea as there will not necessarily be a printer attached to every workstation.

All this allows the course to be used in a variety of ways helping to address learning styles.

Communication skills

This course covers the whole area of communication skills very effectively. It starts by dealing with communication theory, then moves on to written and oral communication. It then follows with communication in practice. This deals with internal and external presentations, leading meetings, interviewing, dealing with the press, and being interviewed on both radio and TV.

While multimedia cannot give you experience and practice in these areas, this course enables you to learn the theory of communication, and gives useful hints and tips that will be valuable to you. It provides useful reference material for anyone who needs to speak to an audience, whether socially or in a business environment.

The course should be studied before taking any of the other courses in this series. Even if you think you know the subject, it is good revision material.

Appraisal and performance review

This course is well organised, the content is good and is dealt with thoroughly. The modules are: Why Appraise?; Appraisal Preparation; Appraisal Discussion; On-going Appraisal and Effective Appraisals. While it is, as they say, for both appraiser and appraised, it is written and produced with the appraiser in mind. This does not stop it from being suitable for both. It is a tool for training new appraisers and, just as importantly, those people new to appraisal systems. This is a useful reference tool for those about to carry out the round of appraisals, whether experienced or otherwise.

While appraisal systems differ from organisation to organisation, the content of this course recognises the fact, but deals with appraisal systems and practices generally. The video sequences give a useful break in the learning and help to emphasise certain points.

Recruitment and selection

This course is very thorough in dealing with the recruitment and selection process. It covers: Recruitment Criteria and Person Specification; Attracting the Right Candidates; Shortlisting and Interview Techniques; Candidate References and Selection; and Equal Opportunities and the Law. If your recruitment and selection is carried out following this process, you cannot fail to get the right person for the job.

The course deals with the need to look at, and if necessary revise, the job description, checking with others; then using the job description to produce a person specification. It then discusses the best way to advertise to ensure you maximise on the number of suitable candidates that apply. This is followed by going through the process of shortlisting, interviewing, checking references and selection, giving many useful tips and hints. Finally it deals with the important subject of equal opportunities and the law.

This course is for anyone getting involved in the recruitment process. It gives a good grounding and is useful as a reference tool for the more experienced.

Modern communication

This course is a courageous piece of work. It deals with all forms of modern communication. It covers faxes, phones, mobile phones, networks, the Internet and intranets, EDI, video and data conferencing, presentation techniques and the all important 'Communicating in the global business community'. It says it is for the technophobe through to the communications manager and I believe they are right. There is something there for everyone.

Certainly it is a very useful tool for all people getting involved in technology and would make an ideal follow-on from basic IT skills courses. It starts with a quick revision of basic communication skills and then deals with each topic in detail, of giving useful hints on what to look for when purchasing the various pieces of equipment.

This course is a must for a very wide audience. Every business should have at least one.

If you have an article, or an idea for a feature in

Training Journal

or you are interested in becoming a member of our book review panel, we would like to hear from you. Please address all correspondence to the Publisher.

Leslie Rae reviews

Leslie can be contacted at Ellray Associates, 29 Laburnum Grove, Sheffield S21 1GR (0114 248 3725)

QUALITY CALLS
Michèle Barca
Fenman, A4 ringbinder, £195 plus £4.90 p&p
ISBN 1 872483 68 2

Customers' options for buying the most suitable product or service are increasing all the time, and the opportunities for sellers to reach more potential buyers are similarly increasing. Customers are advised to shop around before deciding, and sellers are trying to make contact with more and more people. The traditional ways of buying/selling were direct sales at the points of sale – such as the shop or by answering newspaper adverts. But increasing use of the telephone by more people has opened up wider avenues – customers can 'shop around' without leaving the comfort of their armchairs; the sellers can respond to enquiries or make an increasing number of cold telephone calls to a larger number of potential customers than ever before.

The 15 activities in this collection are aimed at helping the trainer/team leader/manager etc, who is running courses on telephone sales. The activities, based on NLP techniques and concepts, are either complete in themselves or can be combined in a training programme, the range covering a complete programme of this nature. They range from an introductory activity to telephone sales, setting objectives and knowing the product; through achieving a state of excellence, anchors and remaining in the state of excellence; to recognising someone's buying strategy, handling objectives and evaluating performance and so on.

The activities themselves follow a format of an introduction, the purpose, application, what happens, time required, materials and resources, the method, feedback and discussion, and round-up. All necessary briefs, handouts and OHP transparency masters are provided, with release of copyright to the purchaser. The times required to run the activities range from 40 minutes to almost 3 hours.

Like many people, I have been on the receiving end of telephone sales, both sought by me and unsolicited. Some of these sales have been good, but a lot (as in face-to-face sales) have been atrocious, so there is obviously a need for more and better training. The activities in this collection will be ideal instruments for the telephone sales trainer who wants learners to achieve 'quality calls'.

ADVANCED GAMES FOR TRAINERS
Rodney Napier and Matti K Gershenfeld
McGraw-Hill, A4 ringbinder, 371 pages, £94.99
ISBN 0 070459 97 5

The authors of this American collection of training activities explain them as 'another book of games and activities for trainers', and whereas previous collections have been focused on the trainers' needs for quick-fix activities, the skills and attitudes of trainers have moved on, their increasing sophistication requiring another level.

This collection is one of activities demanding greater skill, understanding and courage to facilitate and involve a team or group in more powerful experiences than one could ever hope for in more elementary activities.

The collection contains a contents page that gives short summaries of the 38 activities, and a substantial introduction giving guidance to using the activities, asking tough questions, and developing a team using the activities. Following the activities sections there are four appendices covering: 'Large Group Activities – four case studies'; 'A Guide for Facilitators'; 'Principles for Designing an Effective Training Session'; and 'If We had One Piece of Advice for Facilitators, What would it be?' – 27 answers are given based on the responses of the authors' contact with trainers; and 'Basic Evaluation Tips'. The appendices are almost a book in themselves, covering 59 close-print A4 pages – valuable additions.

The 38 activities are sectionalised into 'Icebreakers' (2); 'Team building activities' (9); 'Communication activities' (5); 'Problem-solving activities' (3); 'Conflict resolution activities' (5); 'Feedback activities' (4); 'Organisation development activities' (6); and 'Leadership training activities' (4). The text for most of the activities is extensive and follows the pattern 'What's it all about?; Categories (of us); Materials; Time required; Synopsis; Goals; Background; The activity (very detailed description and method of facilitating the activity); Summary and debriefing; The Turbo version (variations according to size of group and time available); and Tips to facilitators.

Trainers who are used to the almost shorthand format of most of the collections published in the UK may find the detail, particularly in 'The activity' sections of the activity, daunting and off-putting. However, in complex activities this level of description is essential and deserves studying before using the activity.

The trainer who is accustomed to using experiential activities will find the bases of the activities well-known and in common use, but the differences are certainly in the greater complexity of these and their consequent valuable use with training groups that require deeper approaches to experience on a training event. Not all the activities are complex and the times required support this – ranging from 20–30 minutes to over 4 hours; half-a-day and a full day for full versions, less for the 'turbo' versions. However, the majority are in the 2–4 hour range, although one activity extends over one-and-a-half days and another over two days.

If you are involved in facilitating senior or very experienced groups or teams, or are tired (according to the authors) of quick-fix activities, this collection is well worth considering.

SCENARIOS: ASSESSING MANAGEMENT JUDGEMENT - USER MANUAL
Alan Howard and Max Choi
Quest Partnership Ltd, A4 ringbinder, price for Administration Set (Tests, Answer sheets, etc, and User Manual (one of each)) £105 plus VAT (items available separately)
tel: 01452 387288

In my numerous years of management training, much of it practised with experiential techniques, when reviewing with the groups the tasks they had attempted, I frequently had the feeling that they were not believing the feedback I gave them, that they gave each other, and even the feedback they gave themselves. When people were interacting with other people, everything seemed to be so subjective and subject to the differing (and often emotive) views of people coming from various hilltops. I, and I know many of my colleagues, wished there was a much more objective measure with which there could be little argument. Peter Honey's (*et al*) *Behaviour Analysis* came the closest to such an objective measure of the difficult area of behaviour, although many people do not accept its approach to objectivity. This publication by very experienced psychologists and training consultants seemed to offer some hope of a more objective approach to management skills assessment and feedback. Basically it is a recruitment assessment instrument, but with its use of management case studies it has an obvious translation to management development. It is an untimed, psychometric test that places individuals in managerial situations and assesses their responses to what they would do. The judgement displayed appears to be assessed objectively over a six-scale rating from highly undesirable action to a highly desirable action.

The Guide consists of a test of 16 management situations for rating, a scoring sheet, a practice test, and administrative directions. It also consists, the principal inclusion, of 141 pages mainly concerned with the validity and the norms used in the test. The population used to produce the norms included 169 managers attending assessment centres, 69 supervisors seeking appointment to a new team leader position in their organisation, and 115 industrial placement students, university students completing a year in industry before their final degree year.

It must be stressed that the test can only be used by practitioners who are trained to Level A Competence in Occupational Testing.

I am not qualified to assess the, to me, rather restricted validity approaches and I have to admit that I can see little real advantage, other than an assumed technical one, over a well-facilitated, in-depth feedback, discussion and review following a management skills activity – albeit subjective. But can one test a subjective skill by objective means? This is the first UK test of this nature and as such, alone, is worthy of consideration and wider use. I would recommend that Level A test users try this instrument, particularly any that are also management development facilitators, whether for recruitment or management development assessment. If proven, it will represent a major step forward in management skills assessment.

PARTNERSHIPS AT WORK - 20 TRIED AND TESTED ACTIVITIES TO FOSTER EFFECTIVE TEAMS
Ken Birkett and Val Rowland
Fenman, A4 ringbinder, £195 plus £4.90 p&p
ISBN 1 872483 67 4

Another of Fenman's well-produced collection of practical training activities, in a format that is now easily recognisable as coming from the Fenman stable. These activities take account of the movement throughout commerce and industry of flatter management structures, thus encouraging the staff and workers to 'do their own thing'. Consequently, relationships must be stronger and more effective with the more progressive people taking on more self-empowerment. This series of activities is concerned with people at all levels getting an insight into each other's roles and developing mutual empathy. Each activity follows a standardised pattern – an introduction to the activity; a brief statement of the purpose; the specific application; what happens in the activity; the time required; materials and resources required; trainer preparation; the process of the activity; feedback; and round-up. All relevant handouts and OHP transparency masters are included.

The activities range widely in content and include those concerned with 'My people and me' and 'My manager and me'. The activity titles include, for example, 'A basis for effective partnerships at work'; 'Listening and reacting'; 'Understanding your people's needs'; 'Understanding your manager'; 'Knowing yourself'; 'Committing yourself'; and 'Making partnerships effective'. Times required range from 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours 40 minutes, the majority around 1 hour 30 minutes.

There have been so many collections of activities published in recent years that it is difficult to look at any activity and say 'That one is new', and this difficulty was found in this collection. However, the situations, case studies and discussion areas provided were all refreshing in their approach and I can recommend the collection for any practitioner requiring 'people' activities.

Next Month...

Training Strategy, Leadership and Creativity in Training

Date & Venue	Event	Contact
12–13 June London	NLP conference and AGM	The Association for Neuro-Linguistic Programming (UK), 27 Maury Road, London N16 7BP; Tel: 0181 806 6165; E-mail: jo.hogg@virgin.net
15 June Watford	FREE NLP Open Evening with Julie Hay	A D International, Sherwood House, 7 Oxhey Road, Watford, Herts WD1 4QF; Tel: 07000 ADINTE (234683); Fax: 07000 ADINTX (234689); E-mail: consult@adinternational.com
16 June **Leicester**	**Developing Effective Teams**	**Frontline Training, 156 Upper New Walk, Leicester LE1 7QA;** **Tel: 0116 241 4998; E-mail: frontlinet@aol.com**
16–18 June Guildford	Emotional Intelligence Non-Level A trained	ASE, Hanover House, 2–4 Sheet Street, Windsor, Berks SL4 1BG; Tel: 01753 827308; Fax: 01753 620972
18 June Worthing	Interviewing Skills	Axiom MSS, 11 Heene Place, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 3NL; Tel: 01903 266675; Fax: 01903 694883; E-mail: axiom-mss@orangenet.co.uk
21–24 June Cambridge	Occupational Testing Course	Team Focus Ltd, Heritage House, 13 Bridge Street, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 8LR; Tel: 01628 637338; Fax: 01628 626264
23–24 June London Olympia	Seminar and Hosted Events at the M & IT Show	The Meetings & Incentive Travel Show Conference and Travel Publications Ltd, Ashdown Court, Lewes Road, Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5EZ; Tel: 01342 824044; Fax: 01342 824030; E-mail: cat@cat.publications.com
25–27 June Derby	Introduction to Mediation	Nora Doherty, PMR, 20 Gaveston Road, Leamington Spa CV32 6EU; Tel: 01926 339744
30 June Leicester	Learning Centres	NIACE, 21 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE; Tel: 0116 204 4223; Fax: 0116 254 8368; E-mail: celestine@niace.org.uk
7–9 July Loughborough	Safety Management Leadership Skills	Centre for Hazard & Risk Management, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leics LE11 3TU; Tel: 01509 222175; Fax: 01509 223991; E-mail: J.G.Bostock@lboro.ac.uk
6–8 July Birmingham	Training Solutions show	Hall 9, NEC Birmingham
8–9 July London	Managing Successful Projects	TMI, Open Programme Team; Tel: 01564 794100
19–20 July Henley-in-Arden	Leadership and Coaching Skills	TMI, Open Programme Team; Tel: 01564 794100
22 July London	Coaching for Top Performance	IPL Group, 69 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 3HL; Tel: 0800 652 0183

Free listings on this page are included at the discretion of the Managing Editor. However, any company wishing to make a firm booking may do so for a nominal fee of £15.00 + VAT (total, £17.63) for each entry. Entries are limited to three per company in any one issue. Please send your entry details, with cheque, four weeks prior to publication date. Cheques should be made payable to Fenman Limited and sent to ***Training Journal***, **Clive House, The Business Park, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4EH**.

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TFT screens 15 inch £45 per day
TFT screens 18 inch £80 per day
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